THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE: CIO John Halamka offers five tips for managing outages, project delays and other IT crises. PAGE 60

COMPUTERWORLD

100 BEST PLACES TO WORK IN IT 2009

These **TOP-RATED** IT workplaces combine **CHOICE** benefits with **HOT** technologies and **ON-TARGET** training. Our 16th annual report spotlights the employers firing on all cylinders.

NE 8/JUNE 15, 2009 VOL. 43, NO. 21 $5/COPY

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Microsoft

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Mediterranean Shipping Company has discovered a new form of energy.

Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC) is the second-largest container ship line in the world with a database that tracks more than 210 billion transactions a year. The company recently upgraded its database to Microsoft® SQL Server® 2008, not only to handle this massive load, but also to simplify MSC's database administration and help ensure high availability. Which is like a new form of energy for MSC. See the whole story at **SQLServerEnergy.com**

Microsoft
SQL Server 2008

Inside

COMPUTERWORLD ■ JUNE 8/JUNE 15, 2009

NEWS

iPhone 3G S [illegible] of IT admin [illegible] analyst... **HP ProLiant** [illegible]

Microsoft [illegible] **31 vulnerabilities. Sun's top execs** [illegible] **big payday** [illegible] **acquisition** [illegible]

Lawmakers [illegible] White House **cybersecurity coordinator** [illegible] **Department of Homeland Security.**

Economy Forces IT to Cope With Dumped Products. An [illegible]

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General Mills

The food maker that lines your kitchen shelves with Wheaties, Bisquick and more sticks to a tried-and-true hiring philosophy: Invest in making great hires – and reap the rewards of a dynamic and loyal workforce.

How We Chose the Best Places. We [illegible] data from [illegible] more than 27,000 IT [illegible] at those organizations [illegible] the top 100

Scorecards. See [illegible] 100 offer the best benefits [illegible] organization. Also find out what [illegible] IT workers at the top 100

www.computerworld.com/2009bestplaces

SORT THE TOP 100 LIST based on the criteria that matter most to you

OPINION: Staff morale is critical to ensuring that productivity and retention levels remain high. Robert Half Technology's Dave Willmer offers seven tips for maintaining an upbeat work environment.

OPINION: Competition in the IT industry for top talent is as fierce as ever. Read about five ways to attract and retain highly skilled IT workers, from Yoh's Adam Lawrence.

SHARE YOUR VIEWS. Tell us why some employers will never make our list.

The Employers That Made The 2009 List

■ [illegible] ■ Aetna Inc. ■ Alba Inc. ■ Allstate Insurance Co. ■ Amerigroup Inc. ■ American Eagle Outfitters Inc. ■ Amgen Manufacturing Ltd. ■ Applied Materials Inc. ■ Arnold Inc. ■ BAE Systems Inc. ■ Baptist Health South Florida ■ Baptist Memorial Health Care ■ Baptist Memorial Hospital-Memphis Inc. ■ Bon Secours Health System Inc. ■ Booz Allen Hamilton Inc. ■ Capital One ■ CDW Corp. ■ Cedars-Sinai Health System ■ Central Corp. ■ CH2M Hill Companies Ltd. ■ Children's Hospital Boston ■ Children's Hospital Central California ■ Children's Hospital Los Angeles ■ Children's Hospital of Orange County ■ Children's Mercy Hospitals & Clinics ■ Children's Medical Center Dallas ■ Children's Memorial Hospital

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The food maker that lines your kitchen shelves with Wheaties, Bisquick and more sticks to a tried-and-true hiring philosophy: Invest in making great hires – and reap the rewards of a dynamic and loyal workforce.

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This Online

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3 Low-Cost E-mail Encryption Packages

REVIEW: We take a look at a trio of offerings that are easy to use and easy to afford.

2 USB Devices Offer Easy Remote Access

REVIEW: The Pogoplug and I'm InTouch SecureKey let you access files remotely without having to negotiate complex remote-control software.

Blog Spotlight

Windows 7, Macs and Linux

New versions of Windows and Mac OS X are due this fall. So why does Steven J. Vaughan-Nichols think you may want to buy a Linux desktop instead? Simple: Price.

Why Android Won't Beat the iPhone

There are two main reasons why Android won't win the battle for smartphone supremacy, and they have nothing to do with the iPhone enhancements announced last week at Apple's WWDC, says Troy Brumley.

9 Easy Ways to Improve Your Laptop's Sound

Just say no to lousy laptop audio. With a few inexpensive upgrades, your notebook can sound like a million bucks.

How to Cut Network Expenses

Five public-sector CIOs offer tips, from buying IT gear on eBay to the best timing for negotiating with your vendors.

Unix Has a Long and Healthy Future, Users Say

SURVEY: Computerworld's 2009 survey on Unix use shows that the OS will be alive and kicking for some time to come.

SHARK BAIT

Welcome to the Real World

If IT clients can haggle a better price with vendors, then why can't regular consumers with other merchants as well? Watch what happens when the vendor-client relationship spills over into the real world.

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■ LETTERS

Evolving Theory on Human Evolution

The article "Are Computers Transforming Humanity?" [May 18] was excellent. The only statement I would question is that humans take thousands of years to change biologically. That conventional wisdom is now being challenged by a number of genetic researchers, who postulate that the changing environment, and more importantly the greater world population, is dramatically accelerating traditional evolutionary rates.

■ **William A. Yarberry Jr.,** *president, ICCM Consulting LLC, Houston, byarberry@iccmconsulting.net*

■ ONLINE CHATTER

RESPONSE TO:

Can You Trust The Cloud?

June 1, 2009

Getting to and from the cloud is also risky. Internet service providers have more outages than cloud providers. If a company's network switches do not have flow control, or a switch is overwhelmed with traffic, it will drop packets. That is a very bad thing for data integrity, especially for databases. Even if the switches have flow control, the source hardware must be listening. A lot of them do no not stop transmitting when the switch says, "Please pause, I'm full!"

■ **Submitted by:** *Wisesooth*

RESPONSES TO:

Budget Woes Could Boost Government Offshoring

June 1, 2009

We need to limit the use of H-IBs to the primary firms and insist that the worker be employed by the company that uses his services, and not shopped out. Outsourced contract work is how these folks get their foot in the door. First they take over one function that maybe the company is struggling with or wants to offload. Next thing you know they are whispering to your boss, offering to fill more positions with their people. Don't let foreigners build a contracting business on cheap, indentured foreign labor. That's not a level playing field for the American worker.

■ **Submitted by:** *Anonymous*

The H-IB program is thoroughly fraudulent.

The "talent shortage" claims are fraudulent. There is not, and never was, a shortage of people able and willing to do this kind of work at local market compensation.

The "prevailing wage" clause is a fraud because it allows paying below local market compensation.

The "best and brightest," "preeminent," "specialized knowledge," etc. claims are fraudulent. The vast majority of H-IB recipients are, at best, mediocre people doing mediocre jobs, not jobs that require high levels of skill, knowledge or ability.

■ **Submitted by:** *Bruce de la Vega*

Offshore projects take more time. One reason is that it takes extra time to provide detail lacking in the offshore personnel, who do not have the application or business knowledge that an employee tends to have. Then there's the time it takes to fix mistakes, since offshore workers do only what's in the specs. After three years of working with offshore resources, we are convinced that actual project costs tend to be higher due to extra time/rework/inconvenience to users and analysts. Save money. Stay onshore.

■ **Submitted by:** *Midwest IT Guy*

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News Digest

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THE WEEK AHEAD

MONDAY: The HP Technology Forum & Expo 2009 opens in Las Vegas.

TUESDAY: Adobe Systems is scheduled to release its second-quarter financial results; and Hewlett-Packard's Software Universe 2009 conference opens in Las Vegas.

THURSDAY: Progress Software is slated to hold a conference call to discuss its financial results for its second quarter.

MOBILE & WIRELESS

Analysts: New iPhone Still Lacks Features IT Needs

APPLE INC.'S new iPhone 3G S adds several features — remote data-wiping capabilities, hardware-based encryption and the ability to be tethered to a laptop — that are aimed at boosting its rank among IT executives.

However, analysts interviewed after last week's unveiling of the new iPhone at Apple's Worldwide Developers Conference in San Francisco said most IT managers are likely to shun the device until it can be controlled remotely.

The problem with the iPhone 3G S is "that you don't have a console to enforce corporate policies across an entire group of workers," said Kevin Burden, an analyst at ABI Research.

Ken Dulaney, an analyst at Gartner Inc., said that the iPhone 3G S also doesn't allow processing in the background, which would let IT administrators run management tools coveted by large enterprises such as financial firms bound by strict federal regulations.

Since the launch of the iPhone in 2007, Apple has suffered from "enterprise envy," said Steve Hilton, an analyst at Yankee Group Research Inc.

"Having been built for consumer segments, the iPhone now seeks the magic blue pill to extend into the enterprise," he said. "Remote wipe, encryption [and] tethering [are] necessary but not sufficient" to attract corporate IT managers.

The iPhone does have traction in a few large businesses, such as Kraft Foods and Oracle Corp., but the financial services industry has been hard to attract. Bank of America, for example, prefers to stay with Research In Motion Ltd.'s BlackBerry Enterprise Server because it includes centralized management tools.

Stephen Drake, an analyst at IDC, said third-party management tools for the iPhone are starting to emerge, but so far, most are hard to implement and use. Drake said he knows of some businesses that have backed off from iPhone plans because of management and security concerns.

Despite such reservations, Drake called the improvements for the enterprise "a good step" by Apple.

Apple didn't respond to requests for comment.

— Matt Hamblen

HARDWARE

HP Adds Line Of High-End ProLiant Servers

Hewlett-Packard Co. last week introduced a line of x86 servers for companies that operate massive computing facilities, where shaving a few dollars off each system's energy or shipping costs can add up to significant savings.

Christine Martino, general manager of HP's Scalable Computing and Infrastructure group, said the new ProLiant SL servers consume about 28% less power and weigh almost a third less than a "standard" rack-mount server.

The servers have what HP calls a "skinless" design that does away with much of the exterior metal casing, making them look a bit like blade servers.

The first three SL models are due to ship next month, HP said. They're based on Intel Corp.'s Xeon 5500 processors, code-named Nehalem.

– JAMES NICCOLAI, IDG NEWS SERVICE

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SECURITY

Microsoft Issues Record 31 Patches for Bugs in Windows, IE, Office Apps

MICROSOFT CORP. last week issued 10 security updates that patched a record 31 vulnerabilities — 18 marked "critical" — in Windows, Internet Explorer, Excel, Word and other applications.

The bugs are the largest number that Microsoft has patched in a single month since the company began its regular update program in 2003. The previous record of patches for 28 flaws was set last December.

"This is a very broad bunch," said Wolfgang Kandek, chief technology officer at security company Qualys Inc.

"You've got work [to do] everywhere — servers and workstations, and even Macs if you have them. It's not getting any better. The number of vulnerabilities [Microsoft discloses] continues to grow," he added.

Of the 10 bulletins, six patched some part of the Windows operating system, three patched an application or component in the Office suite, and one fixed several flaws in IE.

Eighteen of the 31 bugs carried Microsoft's most serious label in its four-step ranking, while 11 were tagged as "important," the next-lowest level, and two were judged "moderate."

Andrew Storms, director of security operations at nCircle Network Security Inc., suggested that users first patch the IE bugs.

"IE's, by far, take the cake," Storms said. "There are eight [common vulnerabilities and exposures], and there's no doubt that it will be exploited."

Eric Schultze, chief technical officer at Shavlik Technologies LLC, added updates to Internet Information Server and Active Directory to the IE patch in his list of recommendations of what to fix first.

The IIS flaw affects some systems that have enabled Web-based Distributed Authoring and Versioning, or WebDAV, a set of HTTP extensions used to share documents over the Web.

A separate update also includes a tool that can detect a rogue antivirus program called Internet Antivirus Pro. The rogue program tries to trick users into installing password-stealing software.

— Gregg Keizer, with Robert McMillan of the IDG News Service

Short Takes

has confirmed plans to build a $1 billion data center at an as-yet-undisclosed location in North Carolina. Gov. Bev Perdue said the state agreed to give Apple an estimated $46 million in tax breaks over the next 10 years as an incentive to build there.

has agreed to acquire for about $884 million in cash. Intel said the deal will let it quickly expand its catalog of processors for embedded systems and mobile devices.

agreed in principle to a $72 million settlement of a stock-options backdating lawsuit filed by shareholders in 2007. The agreement must be approved by the Northern California federal court.

CORRECTION

The name of Mathew Jancsics, an IT services engineer at Vertex Pharmaceuticals Inc., was misspelled in the May 18 feature story "IT Recycling Pitfalls."

MANAGEMENT

Golden Parachutes for Top Sun Execs Are Revealed

If Oracle Corp.'s acquisition of Sun Microsystems Inc. goes as planned, Sun CEO Jonathan Schwartz will receive a severance package of about $12 million, and co-founder and Chairman Scott McNealy will get around $9.5 million, according to a proxy statement filed last week.

The severance packages are large, though not on the scale of the $21 million-plus paid to former Hewlett-Packard Co. CEO Carly Fiorina, or the whopping $210 million severance paid to former Home Depot CEO Robert Nardelli.

The agreements don't necessarily mean that the Sun executives will leave the combined firm once the deal is done. Indeed, the proxy statement noted that Oracle CEO Larry Ellison "spoke generally" to McNealy "about a role" in the combined company but added that no agreement had yet been reached.

Independent analyst Rob Enderle said that at first glance, the severance packages for the Sun executives don't appear to be excessive.

"Schwartz's severance package appears to be in line with his salary and within range of other packages in [Silicon] Valley, so I think it will be hard to sustain an argument that it is uniquely excessive," Enderle said.

Sun shareholders are scheduled to vote July 16 on whether to accept Oracle's $7.4 billion bid for the company.

– PATRICK THIBODEAU

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Lawmakers Fear White House Cybersecurity Czar Would Undercut DHS Role

S

"Sometimes, I'm sorry to say, we need help to get people to play in the same sandbox."

NOMINEE FOR UNDERSECRETARY, DHS NATIONAL PROTECTION AND PROGRAMS DIRECTORATE

BENCHMARKS LAST WEEK

Jon Rubinstein, who headed Apple Inc.'s iPod division until 2006, was named chairman and CEO of Palm Inc., succeeding Ed Colligan, who is stepping down after 16 years at the firm. Rubinstein had been Palm's executive chairman since 2007.

Adobe Systems Inc. issued its first regularly scheduled quarterly security update, releasing patches for at least 13 critical flaws reported by outside researchers.

11 YEARS AGO: Shareholders of Digital Equipment Corp. approved the acquisition of the company by Compaq Computer Corp.

Russia Launches Microsoft Probe

– The Russian Federal Antimonopoly Service announced earlier this month that it has launched an investigation into whether Microsoft Corp.'s retirement of Windows XP in June 2008 violated the country's antitrust laws.

The agency said in a statement that a hearing has been scheduled for July 24 to determine if Microsoft's June 2008 decision to sell only the Vista operating system violated Russia's federal law on the protection of competition.

The agency said it could file formal charges after the hearing.

In a statement, Microsoft said that it will "cooperate with any inquiry and remains committed to full compliance with Russian law."

with reporting from the IDG News Service

Siemens Turns to Hosted HR Apps

– Siemens AG has awarded San Mateo, Calif.-based SuccessFactors Inc. a contract to supply Siemens with hosted human resources applications for 420,000 users in 80 countries.

Terms of the deal were not disclosed.

In a statement, Siemens said its move to hosted software from SuccessFactors is part of its broader cloud computing strategy.

Ray Wang, an analyst at Forrester Research Inc., called Siemens "a traditional SAP house," adding, "For their team to make a big bet on SuccessFactors represents the new type of thinking present among many CIOs today."

IDG News Service

Intel Corp.'s venture capital arm announced plans to invest $43 million (U.S.) in Tokyo-based WiMax operator UQ Communications Inc. UQ said it will use the Intel Capital funds to expand a 40Mbit/sec. network that it is set to launch July 1. The company expects the network to be available to 90% of the Japanese population by 2012.

GOVERNMENT IT

Lawmakers Fear White House Cybersecurity Czar Would Undercut DHS Role

SOME LAWMAKERS are questioning President Barack Obama's plan to appoint a White House cybersecurity coordinator, fearing that the new post will dilute the role of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

The misgivings were expressed during a U.S. Senate confirmation hearing held earlier this month for Rand Beers, the president's nominee for the post of undersecretary of the DHS's National Protection and Programs Directorate, just days after the Obama announcement.

> **"Sometimes, I'm sorry to say, we need help to get people to play in the same sandbox.**
> **RAND BEERS,** NOMINEE FOR UNDERSECRETARY, DHS NATIONAL PROTECTION AND PROGRAMS DIRECTORATE

Sen. Joseph Lieberman (I-Conn.), who chairs the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, said he fears that a new cybersecurity czar will "undercut the role of the DHS."

"To me, it's not just turf. It's a very critical element of homeland security," Lieberman said.

Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine), a ranking member of the committee, added that concentrating power in the White House could make oversight more difficult — because DHS officials are more likely to appear before the committee when asked.

"[I have a] lot of reservations about the establishment of a White House cybersecurity czar," she said.

Obama told reporters at a press conference announcing the move that the as-yet-unnamed coordinator will be responsible for "orchestrating and integrating" all cybersecurity policies for the government.

In his testimony before the committee, Beers said the White House position will have no operational authority and will serve a purely coordinating function. There will be "no realignment of roles and mission for the [DHS]," and the department's operational role will not be undercut, he added.

— Jaikumar Vijayan

BETWEEN THE LINES *By John Klossner*

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Global Dispatches

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Gregg Keizer, *with* **Jeremy Kirk** *of the IDG News Service*

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Chris Kanaracus, *IDG News Service*

BRIEFLY NOTED

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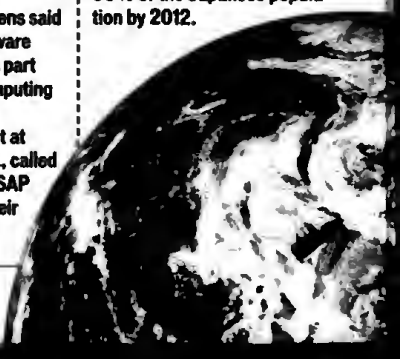

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Vendors cite mergers and slumping business when they decide to kill products with little notice. By Eric Lai

Economy Forces IT To Cope With Dumped Products

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GREGG DAVIS, CIO at Webcor Builders Inc., became concerned last fall when Oracle Corp. bought Primavera Systems Inc., because Webcor was a heavy user of Primavera's SureTrak construction scheduling software.

Sure enough, once the deal closed last November, Oracle stopped supporting SureTrak as a stand-alone application and rolled it into the Primavera P6 project management suite, Davis said.

Protests to Oracle from Davis and other construction industry CIOs fell on deaf ears, and Webcor was forced to purchase a pricey

license for what he called the "behemoth" P6 package.

He added that Webcor is still evaluating potential replacement offerings.

San Mateo, Calif.-based Webcor faced a similar situation early last year, when the $1.4 billion merger of Dell Inc. and EqualLogic Inc. led to the premature end of life for the EqualLogic iSCSI storage-area network arrays that Webcor had hoped to use for several years.

"We were hoping to get at least five, maybe eight to 10 years out of them," Davis said. But suddenly, "we were sitting on a dead, discontinued product."

A SIGN OF THE TIMES

According to analysts, such incidents are happening more often during today's hard economic times. Strong vendors see it as a good time to swallow up weaker competitors and cut out what they see as unneeded products and services.

The bad economy can also prompt the unexpected cutting of products and services by vendors not involved in acquisitions, or even the closing of a key supplier without warning, they added.

Frank Scavo, an analyst at Strativa Inc., a management consulting firm in Irvine, Calif., noted that increased merger activity could provide some benefits to users — such as fewer contracts to manage and more volume discounts. But those are usually outweighed by increased maintenance fees for acquired products, especially those that are difficult to replace, he added.

Scavo suggested that IT managers can often avoid such problems by implementing a policy of purchasing key products from two major vendors. "Always leave the option open to replace one with the other," he suggested.

Vinnie Mirchandani, an analyst at Deal Architect Inc. in Tampa, Fla., goes even further with his advice: Divvy spending among many vendors, and continually perform benchmarking to make sure contractual obligations are met. "Vendors often misinterpret long-term relationships as a license to pull lock-in shenanigans," Mirchandani said.

Even solidly profitable, very stable vendors have responded to the economic woes by cutting products and employees in recent months.

For example, Microsoft Corp. has phased out 13 products over the past eight months, according to Matt Rosoff, an analyst at Directions on Microsoft in Kirkland, Wash.

And many of the 5,000 employees the software vendor has laid off since January were in customer-facing field sales, marketing and support positions, he added.

Ray Wang, an analyst at Forrester Research Inc., said that while most vendors know the importance of keeping customers happy in a tough economy, they cite a variety of reasons — some reasonable and others deceptive — when products, services and support staff are eliminated.

"Blame it on the economy, fear of depending on their people or plain greed, but a good number of executives have taken an approach that attempts to enrich their fortunes at the expense" of customers, wrote Wang in a recent blog post.

He suggested that IT executives seek ways to pressure their vendors to live up to contract terms, even in the case of a merger or acquisition. And if technology companies don't listen to private pleas, Wang suggested that the IT managers take their complaints public.

Users should realize that the poor economy actually gives them some leverage, Wang noted.

> **"Vendors often misinterpret long-term relationships as license to pull lock-in shenanigans.**
> **VINNIE MIRCHANDANI,** ANALYST, DEAL ARCHITECT INC.

For instance, buyers can demand contracts that assure them of working with trusted, effective sales representatives, he said. According to Wang, by threatening to postpone a deployment by a year, one company was even able to get a vendor to retain a consultant whose departure had already been announced.

CONTINGENCY PLANS

Analysts also noted that companies can guard against the unexpected shutdown of key vendors by working out an agreement to hire companies like Iron Mountain Inc., Escrow Associates Inc. or EscrowTech International Inc. to keep the source code of key products in escrow.

Davis, for instance, chose to implement a construction industry ERP software system from Computer Methods International Corp. only after the Toronto-based vendor agreed to a plan to keep the product's source code in escrow.

But for many companies, software escrow can be pricey, analysts said. The practice can also lead to legal battles if stored code is found to be defective or if the vendor claims that it is not contractually required to grant its release.

Such obstacles have led some businesses to turn instead to open-source software, though Davis notes that altering open-source technology to accommodate unique internal needs requires in-house expertise that not all companies have.

Moreover, the shutdown of a vendor of open-source software can be as bad as the closing of a maker of proprietary software. Analysts note that communities tweaking the most popular open-source products are employees of vendors that support the products. In those situations, the community "will definitely fade" if the vendor's business declines, Davis added.

For users of hosted software products, a shuttered vendor means the loss of service, analysts noted. One option is for such customers to use so-called SaaS escrows from service providers like Santa Clara, Calif.-based OpSource Inc., which provides Web application delivery services.

Rather than giving customers access to the hosted product's code, explained OpSource CEO Treb Ryan, a SaaS escrow basically guarantees customers that they will continue to receive service for two or three months after a provider goes out of business. ■

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■ NEWS ANALYSIS

Open Government Could Lead to Data Leaks

Experts say standards are needed to avoid exposure of sensitive information.

By Jaikumar Vijayan

WITHOUT NEW data classification and other governmentwide standards, the Obama administration's push to make information more accessible could lead to the inadvertent exposure of sensitive data, according to security experts.

The warning comes in the wake of last month's accidental posting of a document on the U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO) Web site that listed all U.S. civilian nuclear sites along with descriptions of their assets and activities.

The 267-page document was part of a federal government report being prepared for the United Nations' International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

The document had been categorized as "sensitive but unclassified" — or SBU — a government designation that usually includes at least some controls over disclosure. A large number of government documents fall under the SBU category.

Meanwhile, President Barack Obama is looking to fulfill a campaign pledge by pushing federal agencies to make government data more easily accessible to the public.

Earlier this month, federal CIO Vivek Kundra announced plans to quickly make more than 100,000 data sources available to the public on the government's Data.gov Web site.

"The federal government is trying to push out more data, but they need to make sure... that [sensitive] data isn't pushed out to places where it shouldn't be," said John Pescatore, an analyst at Gartner Inc. "There still is such a thing as 'need to know.' "

"Openness is a wonderful thing, so long as you have checks and balances to see that it doesn't become too open," said Ken Silva, chief technology officer at VeriSign Inc. and a former executive technical director at the U.S. National Security Agency.

When data previously available from a few hundred government sources suddenly starts becoming available via thousands of Web sites — including widely used social networks like Facebook and MySpace — there need to be controls in place to protect against inadvertent leaks, Silva added.

Karen Evans, formerly de facto CIO of the federal government as administrator of the Office of Electronic Government and Information Technology at the Office of Management and Budget, suggested that the sensitive data on U.S. nuclear sites was probably posted because the GPO had a different process for handling SBU documents than the IAEA.

Evans noted that there is little consistency in the way the various federal agencies handle SBU data. Each has its own process for defining, labeling and protecting such information, she said.

In fact, there are some 107 unique markings and more than 130 different handling processes and procedures for SBU information among U.S. government agencies, Evans added.

Such differences are likely to cause more unexpected problems as agencies move to share more information among themselves and with the public.

A 90-day review of rules for classifying, declassifying and maintaining national security information at federal agencies could help mitigate some of the problems, though analysts said it's unclear whether the review will cover SBU issues.

The review was ordered by President Barack Obama late last month.

According to analysts, Obama's push for government agencies to make their data accessible through Web 2.0 tools like mainstream social networks makes accidental exposure of sensitive data even more likely.

Pescatore noted that government agencies with a presence on social networking sites run a higher risk of their data being compromised than those that don't participate in social networks. Therefore, every agency should deploy filtering tools that can block malicious executables coming in from Web sites, he said.

To guard against Web 2.0 leaks, Gartner recommends that government sites use "brand monitoring services to continually monitor social networking sites to see what information shows up," Pescatore said.

Data leak prevention tools should also be used to monitor outbound traffic to detect whether personally identifiable information and other sensitive data is accidentally going out, he added. ■

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Software

Margolis worked as a telephone installer in the 1970s.

MARTIN LIPTON

Dossier

Name: Jane Margolis

Title: Senior researcher

Organization: Institute for Democracy, Education, and Access at the UCLA Graduate School of Education and Information Studies

Location: Los Angeles

Fantasy dinner party guests: "The Obamas before they were famous."

Best book read this year: *When Skateboards Will Be Free: A Memoir of a Political Childhood*, by Said Sayrafiezadeh

Favorite technologies: The pencil and the sewing machine

Technology pet peeve: "It's somewhat addicting."

Ambition: "To make a difference and be calm."

■ **THE GRILL**

Jane Margolis

The UCLA **diversity champion** talks about **missed opportunities,** myths that justify **exclusion,** and the power of **a simple invitation.**

Jane Margolis is now an academic and book author, with a focus on equity in education and computer science. But it was one of her first jobs — climbing poles as a telephone installer — that helped set her future course.

Your work focuses on the intersection of technology, education and diversity. How did you develop that particular interest? Somewhat serendipitously. In the early '70s, I got a summer job as a telephone operator. Then I became a telephone installer, when installers climbed telephone poles. I had two realizations through this job: that I had never worked with tools before, and why had I never been introduced to this? After seven years, I went back to graduate school. The focus of my studies was gender socialization and education.

Your most recent book, *Stuck in the Shallow End: Education, Race, and Computing*, is based on research at three schools in Los Angeles. How did demographics affect access to quality computer science education at the high school level? One school was a predominately Latino school, overcrowded. Most of the students were on free and reduced [cost] lunch. Another school was predominately African-American, a middle- and working-class school. The third was in a white, very wealthy section of Los Angeles. It had one-third students from the neighborhood and two-thirds students of color who traveled from around the city. All three were "digital high schools," which was a state initiative to get technology into the schools and get the schools wired up to the Internet in the late '90s.

The schools with the high concentration of students of color had the most rudimentary of computer science instruction — word processing, cut-and-paste assignments. AP Computer Science, as a regular course, was only at the school with the higher number of white students. [The course] had very few students of color in it. It was mostly white male students.

"Stuck in the shallow end" – can you explain that pool metaphor? I read an article that talked about African-American kids drowning three times more than white children. I learned that 60% of African-American kids do not know how to swim. It turns out that there's a legacy of denied access to swimming opportunities that goes all the way back to Jim Crow, when access to swimming pools, beaches [and] lakefront was very contested. As in every case of segregation, there are belief systems that arise to justify the

Continued on page 20

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"Just inviting students [into computer science] can really make a tremendous difference.

Continued *from page 18*

segregation. There were these absurd notions that blacks were not swimming because they were less buoyant. Those notions masked the history of denied access.

The more I learned about swimming and the denied access to swimming, and the results of people not knowing how to swim, I saw this metaphor for what was happening in computer science.

What do you think are the most significant challenges for the teachers? Lack of a curriculum, lack of a sequence of courses, lack of computer science teaching methods courses, lack of professional development opportunities in a field that is constantly changing, and lack of a learning community. Often, there are just one or two teachers in the school who teach the computer courses. They don't have a learning community to support each other and learn from each other.

Which is the more lacking: the technology in the schools or the qualified teachers? The qualified teachers. In 2000, we saw schools aglow with new technology. We called it "technology rich, but curriculum poor." Nine or 10 years later, those same pieces of equipment are in the schools. A lot of schools need updated technology, but some of them have it. What's missing across all of the schools is the teachers and curriculum.

The afterword to your book is by mathematician Richard Tapia. He seems to contradict all of the stereotypes that you're mentioning. That's right. And there are many people who contradict those stereotypes. Richard Tapia is one of the leaders in the field for diversity and computing. He came from the type of schools we researched. He grew up in Los Angeles. He was not seen when he was in high school for the potential that he had. It wasn't until junior college, where a teacher saw the math brilliance, mentored him and got him into UCLA and onwards. But he was unseen and stuck in the shallow end.

You did some work to help teachers recruit a more diverse student body. Were there any approaches that were particularly successful? Almost anything is successful. One teacher wrote a letter to girls in the top math courses explaining how computer science could be a really interesting course for them and that they are prepared. She made incredible increases in the number of students enrolled in her courses. Just inviting students in can really make a tremendous difference.

Your previous book, *Unlocking the Clubhouse: Women in Computing*, focused on the college level. What were the most significant challenges for women entering computer science there? One issue we found was that female students' motivation for studying computer science was often linked to other fields, like environmental science or robotics or space or developing teaching programs for kids. We described this as computing for a purpose, as opposed to just hacking for hacking's sake. Unfortunately, too many students experienced the first years of the curriculum and culture as more narrow and programming-centric; too many of the female students then felt they didn't belong in computer science and felt a gap between their motivation and the computer science culture and curriculum.

This has changed. Throughout the country, people now realize that you want to introduce and contextualize computer science in college in a meaningful, exciting and engaging way.

What do you see as the long-term consequences of the current pipeline? Computer science today is a door-opener across fields, from film animation to scientific research. In education, we call that "high-status knowledge." It opens up professional doors and can open doors to college and more education. I'm concerned that that knowledge be accessible to all students.

Where can teachers find resources to help them teach diverse students? A very important organization is the Computer Science Teachers Association. They are part of [the Association for Computing Machinery], and they run a whole slew of programs for high school teachers.

The National Science Foundation has a division called Broadening Participation in Computing. There are projects all around the country trying to figure out ways to get more involvement and engagement with African-Americans and Latinos and all under-represented minority students at all levels. Those programs focus on race and gender.

Then there's the National Center for Women and Technology, a large national organization that has brought together academia, social scientists, computer scientists and industry to reimage how people think of computer science and to get more females involved in the field.

— *Interview by* **Joyce Carpenter**

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No. 1 General Mills

100 BEST PLACES TO WORK IN IT 2009

Sue Cousineau Golden Valley, Minn.-based General Mills Inc. began an internship 20 years ago. Katie Dahl Otis worked on projects as varied as the food giant's lineup of breakfast cereals. First there was a project to [illegible] the company's high-profile "Limited Way" campaign to go paperless, then a data analysis project for the customer insights group. Next, she moved to an SAP project in the finance organization and now she's working on developing and maintaining consumer Web sites.

The 29-year-old computer science graduate came to Big Minnesota from balmy Miami and she's found home. "Right now I don't have plans on moving anywhere," Otis says. "General Mills has done a good job of wanting to keep me engaged enough and giving me enough support and projects that I come to do just that."

Indeed, Jill Ibarra could be a poster child for the company's highly successful IT staffing strategy, which revolves around hiring the best and the brightest people and then keeping them engaged and challenged enough to want to spend the rest of their careers with the $15 billion company.

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NO. 2 FOR BENEFITS

Total employees: 17,161
IT employees: 641
IT turnover: 4%
IT promotions: 15%
Training days for IT: 6
Women in IT: 37%
Minorities in IT: 13%

The average tenure at General Mills is about 4.5 years for an IT staffer and 10 years for an IT manager. Turnover is below the industry average of 5%, and this year it's trending downward. And still, as older employees opt to keep working in

HIRING NOW!

General Mills is neither laying off IT professionals nor adding them in excessive numbers. But it is hiring.

"We continue to college-recruit and to staff development positions, and we focus on development paths," says Mike Martiny, vice president of IS. The company focuses on recruiting and hiring the best talent it can find, but there also seems to be an emphasis on hiring recent college graduates. In 2009, General Mills estimates that it will increase IT staffing by about 5%.

"It's absolutely a staffing strategy and a core part of how we keep this group vibrant," says Martiny. "It always helps to bring in fresh, creative people because it challenges our thinking on things we do. They're coming in with a different set of eyes and different technologies and tools, and it challenges our beliefs. It's a great creative tension."

If you're an IT consultant, your chances of finding work at General Mills are pretty low; the company's clear preference is to hire full-time employees and groom them internally.

– JULIA KING

BY JULIA KING

No. 1 General Mills

'COMPANY OF CHAMPIONS'

100 BEST PLACES TO WORK IN IT 2009

SINCE JOINING Golden Valley, Minn.-based General Mills Inc. as an intern five years ago, Karla Juarez has worked on projects as varied as the food giant's lineup of breakfast cereals. First there was a project to enable the company's high-profile United Way campaign to go paperless, then a data analysis project for the customer insights group, Next, she moved to an SAP project in the finance organization, and now she's working on developing and managing consumer Web sites.

The 26-year-old computer science graduate came to frigid Minnesota from balmy Miami, and she says she's found home. "Right now, I don't have plans on moving anywhere," Juarez says. "General Mills has done a good job of wanting to keep me here and given me enough support and benefits that I want to do just that."

In a nutshell, Juarez could be a poster child for the company's highly successful IT staffing strategy, which revolves around hiring the best and the brightest people and then keeping them engaged and challenged enough to want to spend the rest of their careers with the $13.6 billion company. The average tenure at General Mills is about 13 years for an IT staffer and 16 years for an IT manager. Turnover is under the industry average of 5%, and this year, it is trending downward still, as older employees opt to keep working in

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– JULIA KING

A time-honored IT staffing strategy of hiring the best — and doing everything right to keep them — catapulted this food maker into our top spot. **BY JULIA KING**

the face of a shaky economy.

"We've got three beliefs: Recruit like crazy, don't settle for anyone but the best people you can possibly find, and then give them the opportunity to do great work," says Vice President of IS Mike Martiny. "The tagline we use is 'company of champions,' " which is, of course, a play on the "Breakfast of Champions" slogan the company uses for its popular Wheaties brand cereal.

A quick scan of the company's benefits package makes it clear that General Mills also believes strongly in helping workers achieve a healthy work/life balance. The list includes on-site, company-subsidized child care; an on-site fitness center offering free wellness and exercise classes; flexible working hours; and 15 days of vacation after one year of service, with an option to take two additional weeks unpaid.

But what makes General Mills an especially great place to work for technology professionals is the wide variety of work experiences — across different departments and using an array of technologies. This, Martiny says, helps individuals discover where they fit best and identify how they can accomplish their best work at the company.

For example, all college hires complete three rotations in their first five years at General Mills. Additionally, the dozen or so summer interns — who almost always get hired at the company after graduating — as well as all new hires, including experienced IT veterans, meet with each one of the IT department's directors for at least a half hour in their first few months on the job.

General Mills' strategic focus on hiring, retaining and advancing top talent makes for a multigenerational, career-oriented and highly diverse workforce. The day-to-day working environment is highly collaborative, energetic and, well, fun, says Jonathan Carter. Carter joined the company fresh out of graduate school 12 years ago and completed five different rotations before taking on his current job as manager of a nine-person team of developers and analysts that supports the marketing organization.

Carter is an active participant in IS Diversity Champions, one of dozens of grass-roots employee networks and clubs that, workers say, help foster a supportive, family feeling among all who work at General Mills.

MARK LUNENBURG

"We want to sell a lot of Lucky Charms, but we want to do it in a way that reflects greatly in our community."

MIKE MARTINY, VICE PRESIDENT OF IS

IT director Karine Mensch's group, Global Business Services, is also a pilot site for a new workplace concept called FUSE, which stands for "flexible use shared environment." With the FUSE setup, technology and business colleagues have no set office space and instead share a "neighborhood" providing various technologies and collaborative tools on an as-needed basis. Private spaces are also available for conferences or meetings.

"The point is to look for new ways that people work best, looking at space and technology needs," Mensch explains. "We're looking at what a workday looks like. We're trying to push boundaries. If we're measuring results, does it really matter where we sit?"

Like other executives at General Mills, Martiny is convinced that in the long run, this kind of flexibility, along with the company's deeply rooted culture of inclusiveness, state-of-the-art technology tools and best-of-the-best talent, is essential for staying close to the company's customers and ultimately for achieving business success.

The bottom line, he says, is that "we want to sell a lot of Lucky Charms, but we want to do it in a way that reflects greatly in our community." ■

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Genentech's David Fowler (left) and Todd Pierce, vice president of corporate IT, at a recent social gathering for IT employees.

Genentech Inc.

A HOLISTIC APPROACH

2 "THE PACE HERE at Genentech is incredible," says David Fowler, a senior manager in the company's corporate IT unit. "Even in this economic downturn, we are a growth company."

Growth at a company whose mission is high tech requires two major thrusts in IT: "innovation, and a focus on our development staff," Fowler says. "The two really go together. Our supportive environment around how you grow as a professional really fosters a high level of innovation and speed."

NO. 3 FOR BENEFITS
NO. 3 FOR DIVERSITY

South San Francisco, Calif.-based Genentech doesn't just pay lip service to fostering a "supportive environment." Its Personal Excellence Program (PEP) invites employees to explore the whole self: mind, heart and body. It features a facilitated group approach designed to support growth and change through coaching, feedback and peer support. Another program, called the Power of Mindfulness, explores the basic principles and practices of mindfulness and meditation.

Fowler, who grew up in the East, admits that these things may sound a bit like West Coast hocus-pocus, but he says they really work and employees like them. "These programs have changed the whole tenor of the conversation here in IT," he says. "We are trying to get a deep understanding . . . of where we are coming from, what it is our customers need, and exploring options."

Genentech's IT unit is also transforming itself by using products from innovative vendors like Salesforce.com Inc. and Google Inc. Says Fowler, "We really try to leverage the innovation going on in the marketplace."

– GARY ANTHES, A FREELANCE WRITER IN ARLINGTON, VA.

3 San Diego Gas & Electric Co.

NO. 2 FOR RETENTION

In addition to having 401(k) plans, employees at this California utility participate in a noncontributory qualified retirement plan. **Each employee's account is credited with 7.5% of eligible compensation,** with interest credits equal to the average rate on a 30-year Treasury bond.

4 UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

NO. 1 FOR BENEFITS
NO. 2 FOR DIVERSITY

This Ivy League university wanted to increase security, so IT staffers collaborated with the public safety group to develop an "instant alert" system. They worked to find technologies to meet the university's requirements, incorporated additional features and kept costs down by leveraging existing technology.

5 Monsanto Co.

NO. 1 FOR TRAINING

Because no one wants to waste time in traffic, this seed and biotechnology company is helping employees sidestep an ongoing major road construction project in the St. Louis area. **Employees at headquarters are given the option of telecommuting part time or working a flexible schedule.**

6 SECURIAN FINANCIAL GROUP INC.

NO. 6 FOR TRAINING
NO. 3 FOR RETENTION

The economy might be stagnant, but IT employees at this financial services and insurance company in St. Paul, Minn., are seeing opportunities for growth: 15% of IT workers earned promotions in 2008. And possibly the sweetest perk? On-site child care.

7 Verizon Wireless

NO. 7 FOR DIVERSITY
NO. 2 FOR TRAINING

A culture of innovation at this Basking Ridge, N.J., telecommunications company pays off with achievements like this one: Jim Shook, an IT employee, **re-architected a fraud-detection system** to reduce hardware. The system now uses about 95% less power.

8 JM FAMILY ENTERPRISES INC.

NO. 8 FOR DIVERSITY
NO. 7 FOR TRAINING

This automotive company's commitment to staff growth can be found at the very top of the IT ranks. CIO Ken Yerves started at Deerfield Beach, Fla.-based JM Family Enterprises as a software developer. He now helps others achieve upward mobility through an employee development initiative.

Genentech's David Fowler (left) and Todd Pierce, vice president of corporate IT, at a recent social gathering for IT employees.

Genentech Inc.

A HOLISTIC APPROACH to employee growth

"THE PACE HERE at Genentech is incredible," says David Fowler, a senior manager in the company's corporate IT unit. "Even in this economic downturn, we are a growth company."

Growth at a company whose mission is high tech requires two major thrusts in IT: "innovation, and a focus on our development staff," Fowler says. "The two really go together. Our supportive environment around how you grow as a professional really fosters a high level of innovation and speed."

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There's a giant reason we're the best place to work in IT.

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Our Brands. Your Legacy.

GENERAL MILLS

The USAA IT team includes IT Technical Director Steven Large, software engineer Heather Hernandez and CIO Greg Schwartz.

USAA

Staff stick around for COOL benefits and HOT technology

9 HEATHER Hernandez had several attractive job offers after graduating from college in 2007, but an internship she'd had at USAA a year earlier made her choice easy. The financial services company has a great work environment, and its IT staff morale is high.

"It's a lot of fun," says Hernandez, a software systems engineer and WebSphere administrator.

To Hernandez, "fun" means working with a wide range of technical platforms and software languages, and participating in team-building exercises like company-sponsored paintball games.

Once on board, IT staffers tend to stay. CIO Greg Schwartz got his start 26 years ago as a programmer trainee. Steven Large, IT technical director, came to San Antonio-based USAA out of school, expecting a short stay before "jumping around" among companies to advance his career. That was 19 years ago.

For Hernandez, the greatest reward is that her ideas go right to the top. "They'll ask me to come to meetings and bring fresh ideas," she says. "It's exciting to even be asked."

– ROBERT L. MITCHELL

University of Miami

10 NO. 1 FOR DIVERSITY | NO. 5 CAREER DEVELOPMENT

This prestigious university in Coral Gables, Fla., recently restructured its pay plan to convert IT staff members who handle after-hours tasks to hourly paid employees. As a result, many IT staffers have received thousands of dollars in incremental pay.

11 AMERICAN FIDELITY ASSURANCE CO.
NO. 6 FOR RETENTION
NO. 8 FOR TRAINING

It's no surprise that the most-talked-about benefit at this life and health insurance firm, based in Oklahoma City, is the "All-Colleague" bonus. Last year, the average IT bonus averaged about 26% of base salary. The program was started about 13 years ago.

12 Marriott International Inc.
NO. 9 FOR TRAINING

If a company is a great place to work, its employees generally stay put. And at this Washington based hotelier, long tenure and low turnover abound. In 2008, **the IT unit had a voluntary turnover rate of just 6.9%,** and the average tenure of its IT staffers was 10 years.

13 SUN MICROSYSTEMS INC.
Women in IT: 30%
Minorities in IT: 29%

The flexible work location program tops the list of perks at this IT giant. Through the program, nearly 19,000 employees, or 56% of Sun's global workforce, work in a place other than a designated office – at home, say, or even in a coffee shop near a customer's office.

14 Quicken Loans Inc.
NO. 8 FOR BENEFITS
NO. 4 FOR DIVERSITY

Higher learning gets a boost at this online mortgage lender in Livonia, Mich. **IT workers are offered a 25% tuition scholarship toward undergraduate and graduate degrees.** That even applies to studies at Northcentral University, an accredited online institution.

15 RAYTHEON CO.
NO. 3 FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT
NO. 4 FOR BENEFITS

A juicy new perk for the IT staff at this Waltham, Mass.-based defense contractor is the IT Advanced Study program, which helps IT employees obtain master's-level education through formal academic programs by covering the costs of tuition, fees and books.

16 Quintiles Transnational Corp.
IT turnover: 5%
IT promotions: 12%

This contract research firm in Research Triangle Park, N.C., knows money can be a big motivator. **All workers are eligible for cash bonuses under the company's Performance Incentive Plan.** And IT's strategy is squarely focused on processes, customer value, employees and the organization.

The USAA IT team includes IT Technical Director Steven Large, software engineer Heather Hernandez and CIO Greg Schwartz

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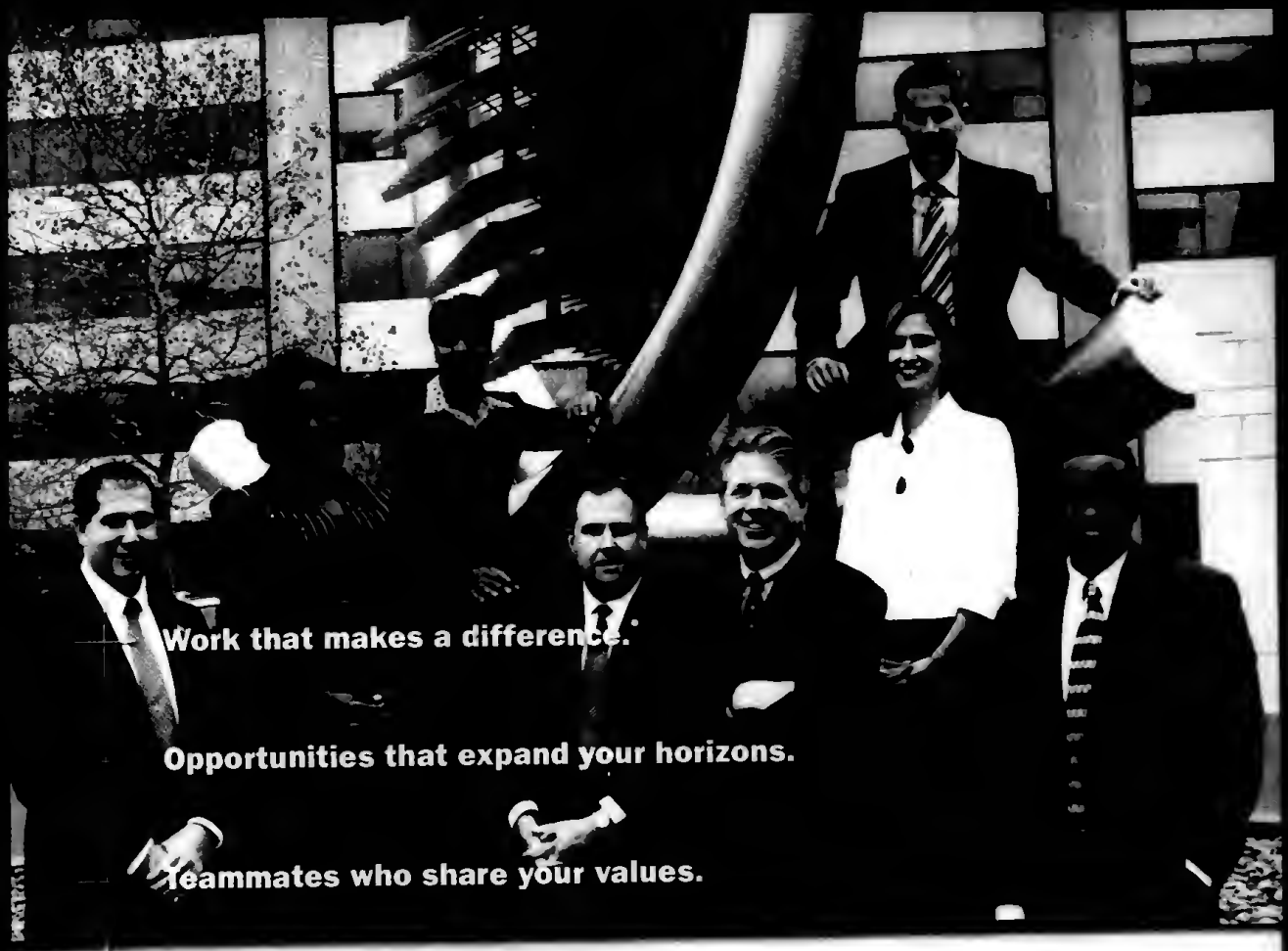

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delivering results that endure

OhioHealth's Michael Krouse and Mary Jo McElroy led a project to equip one of the first truly paperless hospitals in the U.S.

OhioHealth

LATEST

17 STAFFERS in IT at OhioHealth get a good dose of leading-edge medical technology at the system's 16 hospitals and 17 ambulatory care sites in Ohio.

More than half of OhioHealth's 300 IT employees helped equip a new hospital in Dublin, Ohio, with a range of technologies, including wearable, hands-free communication devices and audio, visual and data networks for off-site physicians and nurses. The IT staff has even helped introduce smart IV pumps.

"It's been a fun experience for IT. We tried out a lot of things that we would not ever hope to accomplish en masse at an existing facility," says CIO Michael Krouse. The new hospital, Dublin Methodist, is one of the first truly paperless hospitals in the country, and it serves as a model for OhioHealth's other facilities.

The technology push is so intriguing that many health care professionals have left their medical posts to join IT.

"It allows us to work with the business side in a way that they know we truly get it," says Mary Jo McElroy, a former nurse and now vice president of IT compliance and standards.

"About 40% of the IT staff has been with OhioHealth for 10 or more years," she notes.

Quirky perks include on-site car detailing, holiday gift-wrapping, and on-site sales of Valentine's Day candy and flowers at reduced rates. Employees with 20 or more years of service are treated to an annual shopping spree with $15 for every year of service, along with a paid day off, breakfast, lunch and entertainment.

– STACY COLLETT, A *COMPUTERWORLD* CONTRIBUTING WRITER (STCOLLETT@AOL.COM)

18 Michelin North America Inc.

NO. 7 FOR RETENTION
NO. 1 FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT

This Greenville, S.C.-based tire maker, known for brand names like Michelin, BF Goodrich and Uniroyal, offers a program called **"Choose Well, Live Well."** Treatment for a number of chronic conditions, like diabetes, is fully paid for by the company.

19 SAS INSTITUTE INC.

IT turnover: 3%
IT promotions: 7%

The IT team at this Cary, N.C.-based software company offers 24/7 data center coverage and round-the-clock global support, so flexibility is key to employee happiness. SAS offers flexible hours, comp time and time off to deal with situations such as family emergencies and home repairs.

20 Rackspace US Inc.

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After a successful quarter, executives at this San Antonio-based managed hosting services company **reward employees with theme parties** such as "Racktoberfest" and "Rack Idol." Employees can work flexible hours, and they receive 15 paid days off per year.

21 DTE ENERGY CO.

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Job stability might be the best benefit these days. At this Detroit-based natural gas and electric utility and energy technology provider, the entire IT group remains fully employed, providing a "steady-state" level of professionals with diverse skills. The IT workforce can expand to meet short-term needs with contract staffers.

22 Commonwealth Financial Network

NO. 10 FOR TRAINING
IT promotions: 12%

Job advancement and education go hand in hand, and this financial services company in Waltham, Mass., offers a **combination of in-house and off-site classes to help train its IT workers in the latest technologies.** The company also offers telecommuting arrangements and flexible schedules.

23 EXELON CORP.

IT promotions: 9%
IT training days: 6

One of the top perks for IT workers at this Chicago-based utility holding company is the flexible work options program. It offers flex schedules, the opportunity to work from an alternate company location, home-based work and compressed work schedules. Several business units have now adopted similar programs.

OhioHealth's Michael Krouse and Mary Jo McElroy led a project to equip one of the first truly paperless hospitals in the U.S.

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This mutual insurance company in Bloomington, Ind., is trying out a new strategy to boost creativity and enhance productivity. **Its office facilities have been redesigned** to include common areas that offer a relaxed atmosphere and an open floor plan.

Southern Co.'s IT team includes Todd Spinello, Faith McLemore, CIO Becky Blalock, Lily Chiang and Dave Coker.

25 PRUDENTIAL FINANCIAL INC.

Women in IT: 36%
Minorities in IT: 29%

Employees at this Newark, N.J.-based life insurer, the second largest in the U.S., put a high value on the firm's Total Rewards benefits package. In addition to standard perks, the package includes more than 40 programs to recognize employee achievements and milestones such as anniversaries.

Southern Co.

COMMUNICATION

28 WITH 1,100 IT employees spread over four states and 120,000 square miles, Atlanta-based Southern Co. has to work hard to create a sense of community. But thanks to a two-way communication flow that's the envy of other business units at the energy firm, IT employees feel that their voices are heard and that their most important needs – including training and flexible work options – are met.

"In the absence of communication, miscommunication happens," says CIO Becky Blalock. That's why notes from the senior IT leaders' weekly conference call are broadcast to IT employees every Tuesday.

Community involvement isn't just encouraged – it's expected: Workers are assessed in their performance reviews for their community contributions, and they rate their managers on that score, too. In the past year, IT has joined with five other organizations to build a house for Habitat for Humanity. "If the community we serve is vibrant and growing, our company benefits," Blalock says.

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26 Altria Group Inc.

NO. 6 FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Money talks at this tobacco company based in Richmond, Va., and one prime perk for employees is the deferred profit sharing program. **The company contributes up to 18% of an employee's eligible compensation to the program.**

27 SCOTTRADE

NO. 5 FOR RETENTION
Training days for IT: 10

Job security, especially in today's economy, is what really matters to many IT workers. Since this St. Louis-based online brokerage opened its doors in 1980, it has never had to lay off an IT worker. The firm says it plans ahead for market fluctuations, sometimes taking smaller profit margins rather than cutting payroll costs.

29 Aflac Inc.

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Minorities in IT: 28%

This Columbus, Ga.-based insurance company encourages its employees to volunteer and backs that up with the support needed to make it happen. **Aflac provides paid time off for employees to participate in community events,** including Habitat for Humanity home building projects.

30 PALMETTO HEALTH

IT turnover: 7%
IT promotions: 14%

This not-for-profit health care system in Columbia, S.C., strives to keep its tech workers in the know. The IT department distributes monthly reports with statistics on the help desk's performance in responding to user requests for support, and it holds quarterly forums to share updates on goals.

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Close **COMMUNICATION** keeps a widespread operation humming

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TURN
TO CLEAR
VISION

Discover Financial's IT team includes CIO Glenn Schneider, Ramon Joson, Diana Darden, Diana Olex and Barret Gobeyn.

Discover Financial Services

BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS

31 MOST companies would say they value IT employees who can work effectively with business users, but at Riverwoods, Ill.-based Discover Financial Services, it's a way of life.

"It starts with our hiring," says CIO Glenn Schneider. "We go beyond the technology component and look at what their business background is and how business-savvy they are." Sometimes the company will hire a business major over a technology major and put that person into a business analyst, business liaison or project management job, he says.

That emphasis on the needs of the business pays off in terms of credibility. In fact, IT people are sometimes asked to work on problems for which the solution turns out not to involve technology at all. "The exciting thing is, that's the respect we have gotten from our business partners," Schneider says. "They appreciate our knowledge and insights."

Discover has a "dual-track" career path that rewards both technologists and business-oriented IT people.

While Discover does recruit IT people right out of school, nearly all of its hires have already interned at the company. Schneider says he tries to put all his employees on important, highly visible projects. "It's great for morale, because they are working on something they know will move the needle of the company."

– GARY ANTHES

Allstate Insurance Co.

32 Total employees: 36,326
IT employees: 4,002

Here's a company that knows the value of a healthy workforce. For the past two years, this Northbrook, Ill.-based insurance firm has sponsored a companywide wellness program, called Well & Fit, through which employees (including the CEO) participate in campus walks or runs and take advantage of free resources that promote overall health and well-being, such as on-site health screenings. The company also partners with the Mayo Clinic and Weight Watchers to help employees improve their diet and exercise regimens. On-site cafeterias provide Weight Watchers points and detailed nutritional information for items offered.

IT teams also participate in volunteer activities on company time to help those in need and revitalize neighborhoods. Last year, employees and agencies together contributed more than $5 million to community organizations.

33 PRINCIPAL FINANCIAL GROUP INC.
IT turnover: 9%
IT promotions: 9%

It's all about balance at this financial services provider in Des Moines. Since IT staffers might have to put in long hours or be on call, the company offers flexible work options, including compressed workweeks, telecommuting, job sharing and part-time employment.

34 Ernst & Young LLP
IT turnover: 8%
IT promotions: 10%

One of the Big Four accounting firms, Secaucus, N.J.-based Ernst & Young has set up **a variety of resource networks to foster an inclusive work environment,** including one for employees with disabilities and another for working mothers.

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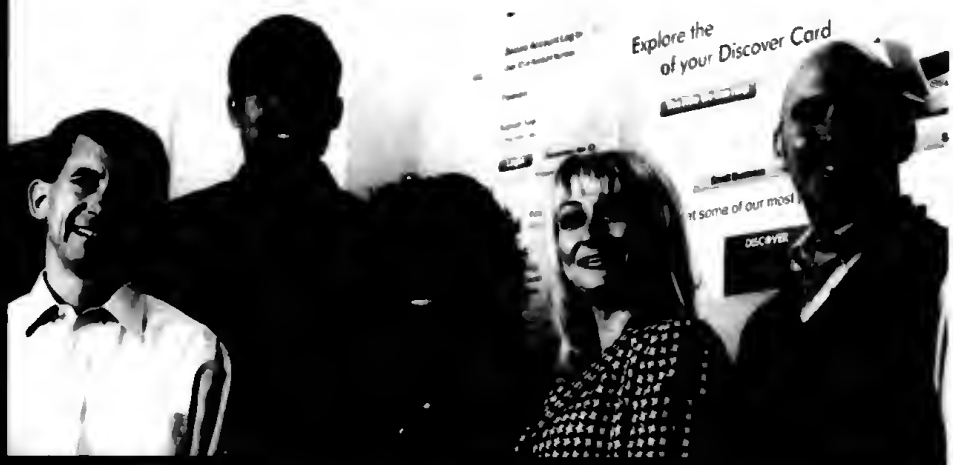
Women in IT: 37%
Minorities in IT: 7%

IT staffers at this payroll accounting firm in Rochester, N.Y., encourage one another to stay fit through a variety of wellness activities. For the past two years, IT employees have taken part in the Eat Well, Live Well program, in which participants are challenged to increase the number of steps they take daily.



Discover Financial's IT team includes CIO Glenn Schneider, Ramon Jeson, Diana Darden, Diana Diex and Barret Gobeyn

JEFF BERGER

Discover Financial Services

BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS are a full-time focus

31 MOST companies would say they value IT employees who can work effectively with business users, but at Riverwoods, Ill.-based Discover Financial Services, it's a way of life.

"It starts with our hiring," says CIO Glenn Schneider. "We go beyond the technology component and look at what their business background is and how business-savvy they are."

Sometimes the company will hire a business major over a technology major and put that person into a business analyst, business liaison or project management job, he says.

That emphasis on the needs of the business pays off in terms of credibility. In fact, IT people are sometimes asked to work on problems for which the solution turns out not to involve technology at all. "The exciting thing is, that's the respect we have gotten from our business partners," Schneider says. "They appreciate our knowledge and insights."

Discover has a "dual-track" career path that rewards both technologists and business-oriented IT people.

While Discover does recruit IT people right out of school, nearly all of its hires have already interned at the company. Schneider says he tries to put all his employees on important, highly visible projects. "It's great for morale, because they are working on something they know will move the needle of the company."

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NOT ALL OF OUR HEROES PRACTICE MEDICINE

Named one of Computerworld's *100 Best Places To Work in IT 2009*

Always at the forefront of healthcare technologies, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center is installing a major clinical IT system.

The Enterprise Information Services (EIS) department is looking for all levels of experienced clinicians with strong operations and bedside care experience, and a proven track record of making the transition to information technology. Join an experienced team with a clear strategic vision.

Visit our career center at www.cedars-sinai.edu/careers or call 310-423-6289.

CEDARS-SINAI

Chubb's IT team includes (front) Jim Knight, Laura Yen and Catina Jackson and (back) Corky Valenti, Mary Glacken and Owen Williams.

Chubb Corp.

COLLABORATIVE

36 AFTER striking up a conversation at the office coffee bar, senior technical analyst Scott Greenberger realized that his colleague had database tuning expertise he needed on a project. The man agreed to help – even though he was from a different group. That's the way it works at The Chubb Corp., Greenberger says. "It's very collaborative."

Although IT staffers are embedded within the Warren, N.J.-based insurance company's individual business units and report to different CIOs, managers don't hoard their staff resources. "We tend to put people on projects in places where they're needed," he says.

Heidi Proodian, recently promoted to vice president of claim business intelligence, credits her rise at Chubb to the company's focus on cross-disciplinary education and career advancement. Proodian, who came over from the business side of the house, says her experiences with cross-organizational task forces and Chubb's leadership programs helped. "[The program] helps you look within and develop a self-awareness," she says.

Proodian also appreciates benefits such as flextime that promote work/life balance. "Chubb has the full package. What's unique is that it offers it all," she says.

Staffers also have an opportunity to give back. The IT Cares organization raises money for charitable causes while strengthening the connections among more than 1,100 IT employees.

"It's helped us to get to know each other," Proodian says. "It facilitates collaboration."

– ROBERT L. MITCHELL

37 The Mitre Corp.

NO. 3 FOR TRAINING

The most popular benefit at this not for profit science and engineering organization, which is located in McLean, Va., is the retirement program. **This defined contribution plan has a 99% employee participation rate** and includes employer matches for both the basic level of employee contributions and voluntary contributions.

38 OCLC ONLINE COMPUTER LIBRARY CENTER INC.

IT turnover: 8%
IT promotions: 8%

Employees at this Dublin, Ohio, nonprofit computer library service and research organization have their pick of three retirement programs. The company also offers flexible hours, compressed workweeks, reduced work hours, job sharing and telecommuting.

39 Grant Thornton LLP

Women in IT: 32%
Minorities in IT: 30%

This Chicago based accounting firm wants to hear what its IT employees have to say. **The company actively solicits and acts on feedback, capturing ideas, suggestions and concerns.** A need for more flexible work arrangements is one such issue now on the table.

40 QUALCOMM INC.

IT turnover: 6%
IT promotions: 14%

Employees at this San Diego-based wireless communications vendor contribute nothing – zero – for full health insurance benefits, including dental and vision care, for them and their immediate families. There are also fitness centers and Weight Watchers meetings on all the major campuses.

41 Booz Allen Hamilton Inc.

NO. 4 FOR TRAINING

IT staffers here get to use what they call a **"technology petting zoo"** – a research and development center where employees can test cutting-edge and prototype technologies. This global consulting firm, which is based in McLean, Va., also offers a variety of advanced training courses.

42 EDWARD JONES

IT turnover: 5%
IT promotions: 9%

Every worker shares in this financial services firm's profits through trimester bonus and profit-sharing plans. The last remaining partnership among the large New York Stock Exchange securities firms, St. Louis-based Edward Jones is owned by more than one-third of its full-time workers.

Chubb's IT team includes (front) Jim Knight, Linda Yen and Catina Jackson and (back) Ricky Valenti, Mary Glacken and Owen Williams

Chubb Corp.

A **COLLABORATIVE** environment fuels success, loyalty

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HCA

Hospital Corporation of Amer

Proud to be named one of Computerworld's 100 Best Places to Work in IT 2009

Congratulations to all who make HCA ITS an award-winning place to work.

Medtronic IT team members Steve Wond[illegible] (seated) and Gary Pan[illegible]

Medtronic Inc.

CUTTING-EDGE technologies paired with on-site conveniences

DURING a lunch break, IT staffers at Medtronic Inc. can pick up a Caribou coffee, grab some cash at the ATM, mail a package and drop off their dry cleaning – all without leaving the facility.

The medical device company's 75-acre, airport-like campus near Minneapolis, which opened in October 2007, also includes a car maintenance shop, a health care clinic, a restaurant, 18 "mothers' rooms" and outdoor walking paths.

Even better than the conveniences is the IT unit's working environment, which is collaborative and highly focused. "IT staff is engaged in projects that make a difference in people's lives," says Katie Klungseth, senior employee engagement specialist for human resources shared services IT. The company manufactures medical devices such as implanted defibrillators, pacemakers, biologic delivery devices and diagnostic tools for patients with chronic diseases.

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– STACY COLLETT

Lehigh Valley Health Network

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IT turnover: 7%
IT promotions: 20%

Feedback is more than a two-way street at this Allentown, Pa.-based health services group; it's a multilane highway. IT workers receive annual reviews, as well as personalized comments from a team director and the CIO.

Plus, each employee's annual review meeting is attended by the employee's manager, a team director and the CIO – meaning the CIO takes part in more than 200 reviews each year.

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Employees get a slice of the pie at this health insurance company in Birmingham. [illegible] The company sets and monitors individual and corporate stretch goals, which are tied to business objectives.

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IT promotions: 12%
Training days for IT: 9

A new CIO, Edward Marx, is spurring new programs at this nonprofit health care system in Arlington, Texas. One such program is geared toward **developing employees' career paths through seminars and skills training workshops.** The program is also helping employees develop their interpersonal skills.

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IT workers at this financial services firm in St. Petersburg, Fla., have plenty of perks. Among other things, **they get discounts on trade transactions.** The firm also allocates a portion of profits to a general pool of money distributed to eligible employees.

49 VHA INC

IT promotions: 6%
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Employee feedback is a critical part of the equation at this health care organization, based in Irving, Texas. Managers respond to that feedback by, among other things, [illegible] improve the work/life balance of employees and [illegible] for the flow of creative ideas. **Benefits include merit bonuses, a fitness center and free popcorn.**

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Employees of this Los Angeles-based nonprofit health care organization get the best of what it has to offer. The largest nonprofit hospital in the western U.S., Cedars-Sinai offers its employees [illegible] and waives co-payments for visits at many Cedars-Sinai physician offices.

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100 BEST PLACES TO WORK IN IT 2009

How We Chose the Best Places

FOR THE 16TH YEAR in a row, *Computerworld* conducted a survey to identify the 100 best places to work for IT professionals. In September 2008, *Computerworld* started accepting nominations from U.S.-based companies. Participants were asked to provide the name and contact information of an appropriate individual at the nominated company who was familiar with or had access to employment statistics and financial data, as well as information about benefits policies and programs for the IT department and the company as a whole.

In January 2009, the contacts at the nominated companies received a 75-question company survey asking about their organizations' average salary and bonus increases, percentage of IT staff promoted, IT staff turnover rates, training and development, and the percentage of women and minorities in IT staff and management positions. In addition, information was collected on how each organization rewards outstanding performance, how their retention programs operate and what benefits they offer. Information from those surveys was used in compiling the 100 company profiles.

Upon completion of the company survey, participants were e-mailed instructions on selecting a random sample of their U.S.-based full- and part-time IT staffs. All participating companies were required to obtain feedback from their employees. The responses to the employee survey went directly to a third-party research firm. Topics covered in the survey included satisfaction with training and development programs, compensation, benefits, and programs designed to foster work/life balance. In addition, employees were asked to rate morale in their IT departments and the importance of various benefits, and to state the degree to which they agreed with a variety of statements regarding subjects such as career growth and management's fair and equal treatment of employees.

A total of 27,812 IT employees responded to the employee survey from the final 100 companies. The nomination survey, company survey and employee survey were all conducted via the Internet. The company and employee survey phase of the research ended in March 2009. To qualify to complete the company survey, participating companies had to have a minimum of 50 IT employees.

The top-10 lists (page 45) show the best of the best – the organizations that excel in five areas of HR: diversity, career development, retention, benefits and training. To determine those lists, we considered the following:

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BENEFITS The range of benefits offered, including sabbaticals, elder and child care, and health and vision plans; employee satisfaction with the range of benefits.

In scoring the responses from the company and employee surveys, company results were weighted based on employees' importance ratings from the employee component. Approximately half of the total scoring was based on employee responses, with the remaining half based upon the survey of the company's benefits and other programs. ■

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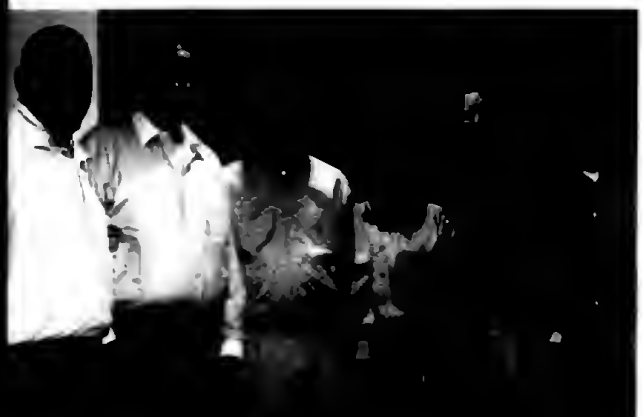
SONICWALL VS SPIRALING TCO
NO CONTEST
SonicWALL's high performance network and data protection reduces TCO and management complexity.
See how at www.sonicwall.com/lowtco
SONICWALL



Apollo's IT leadership team: [illegible] and Ed [illegible]

Apollo Group Inc.

ONLINE LEARNING spurs need for innovative IT

51 AS PARENT company of the University of Phoenix, Apollo Group Inc. has transformed its clients from anonymous students into people with inspiring life stories. Many graduates tell their tales in the school's "I Am a Phoenix" marketing campaign. And those stories help inspire the 1,200 full-time IT professionals charged with supporting the students' efforts to obtain online degrees, according to Joe Mildenhall, Apollo's CIO.

"Our mission is to change lives through education, and that creates an atmosphere where people are excited about impacting people's lives," Mildenhall says. More than 390,000 students are enrolled at Apollo's various educational facilities, and more than half of them rely on its online environment.

This creates opportunities for innovative IT. For example, Apollo recently enabled students to participate in online classes using iPhones and other Apple devices. IT also recently created software that provides role-based customer relationship management capabilities to the 17,000 staff members who support academics, finance and enrollment. If a student hasn't been attending, for instance, or is taking longer breaks between classes, the system might prompt the counseling staff to give the student a call.

As for compensation, Apollo offers not just annual merit increases, but also job enhancements and pay increases aimed at keeping salaries on par with market rates at any time during the year. This past year, approximately 12% of IT employees received a pay increase outside of the performance review period, and 14% were promoted.

– MARY BRANDEL

55 [illegible]

7

38%

As part of the development process at this chemical firm in Kingsport, Tenn., [illegible]

Interested employees are also given opportunities outside of IT, in areas such as manufacturing, to enhance their skills.

56 HCA Inc.

IT turnover: 6%
IT promotions: 14%

At this for-profit hospital operator in Nashville, the largest in the U.S., **the focus is on giving back – to the community and its own employees.** In 2008, 1,526 HCA employees volunteered at 101 agencies in the community, contributing over 12,000 hours of volunteer time.

52 National Information Solutions Cooperative

IT turnover: 4%
IT promotions: 14%

This data-processing and billing service in Lake St. Louis, Mo., offers employees **loans of up to $3,500 for the purchase of a home PC or peripherals.** The interest-free loans are paid off through payroll deductions.

53 NORTHERN TRUST CORP

IT turnover 6%
IT promotions 7%

IT employees at this Chicago-based multibank holding company enjoy [illegible] Many of the 1,174 IT staffers worldwide choose to work longer daily hours, with a shortened workweek; others work from home one day or more per week.

54 Norton Healthcare

Women in IT: 59%
Minorities in IT: 16%

The benefits are plentiful at this health care provider, which runs five hospitals and manages health care clinics in Kentucky and Indiana. The company **assists its workers with the purchase of homes and PCs, and offers public transportation discounts.**

57 PRICEWATERHOUSECOOPERS

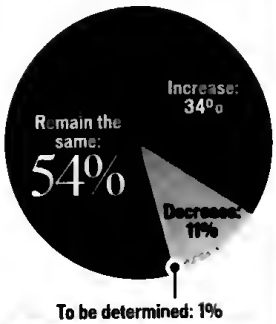
NO. 10 FOR BENEFITS
Training days for IT: 5

This New York-based accounting firm believes in giving its workers ample time to recharge. IT [illegible] 10 paid holidays, periodic paid holiday shutdowns, early office closings before company holidays and summertime "Flex Fridays."

By the Numbers

HIRING FORECAST

PERCENTAGE OF ORGANIZATIONS THAT IN 2009 EXPECT THE NUMBER OF U.S.-BASED IT STAFFERS TO



AVERAGE EXPECTED INCREASE	AVERAGE EXPECTED DECREASE:
6%	5%

THE TYPICAL BEST PLACE

Revenue	$10 billion
IT budget	$286.8 million
Total number of employees	21,039
Total number of IT employees	938
Average workweek	42 hours

TRAINING

69% Average percentage of training conducted in person

31% Average percentage of training conducted remotely

6 Average number of training days for each IT employee in latest fiscal year

35% Percentage of companies that said their training budgets per IT employee will increase in 2009 compared with 2008. 9% expect a decrease, and 56% said there will be no change

STAFFING

Average IT staff turnover rate, latest fiscal year	8%
Average percentage of IT staff promoted, latest fiscal year	11%

M&A ACTIVITY

35% have merged with or acquired organizations or divested business units since Jan. 1, 2008

3% of U.S.-based IT employees from all organizations were affected (laid off, transferred, etc.) by such business actions

COMPENSATION

75% of organizations have budgeted for salary increases for IT employees in 2009

75% have budgeted for bonuses for IT employees in 2009

91% contribute to employees' 401(k) or 403(b) plans

WHAT THEY DO

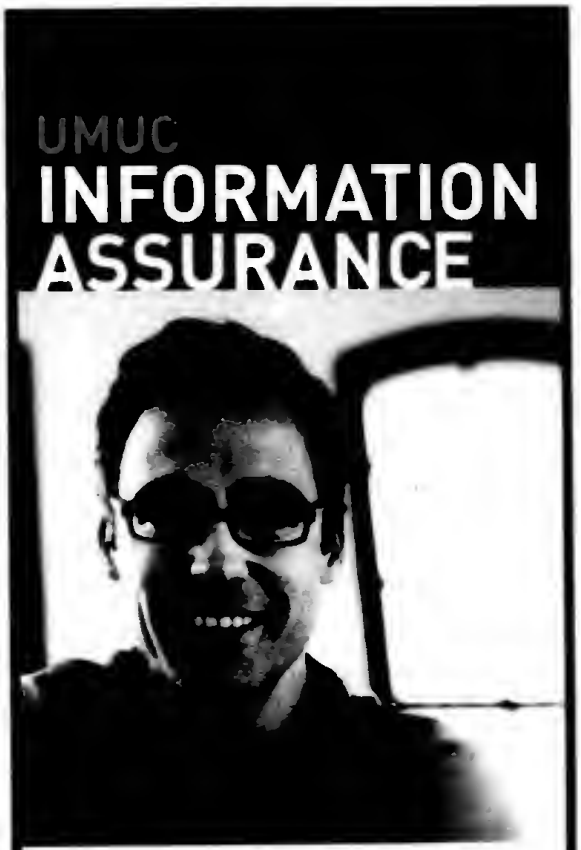
PERCENTAGE OF ORGANIZATIONS IN THE FOLLOWING INDUSTRIES

Health/medical services	13%
Insurance	12%
IT consulting	11%
Finance	10%
Energy/utilities	8%
Education	7%
All other industries	39%

WHERE THEY ARE

North Central U.S.	31
South Atlantic	27
Mid-Atlantic	16
Pacific	10
South Central	9
New England	5
Mountain	2

SOURCE: SURVEYS OF THE 100 BEST PLACES TO WORK IN IT 2009



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UMUC
University of Maryland University College

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Apollo's IT leadership team: Dustin Howard, Dennis Myers, CIO Joe Mildenhall, Chandra Ambadipudi, Grant Gasson and Ed Escobedo

Apollo Group Inc.

ONLINE LEARNING

51 AS PARENT company of the University of Phoenix, Apollo Group Inc. has transformed its clients from anonymous students into people with inspiring life stories. Many graduates tell their tales in the school's "I Am a Phoenix" marketing campaign. And those stories help inspire the 1,200 full-time IT professionals charged with supporting the students' efforts to obtain online degrees, according to Joe Mildenhall, Apollo's CIO.

"Our mission is to change lives through education, and that creates an atmosphere where people are excited about impacting people's lives," Mildenhall says. More than 390,000 students are enrolled at Apollo's various educational facilities, and more than half of them rely on its online environment.

This creates opportunities for innovative IT. For example, Apollo recently enabled students to participate in online classes using iPhones and other Apple devices. IT also recently created software that provides role-based customer relationship management capabilities to the 17,000 staff members who support academics, finance and enrollment. If a student hasn't been attending, for instance, or is taking longer breaks between classes, the system might prompt the counseling staff to give the student a call.

As for compensation, Apollo offers not just annual merit increases, but also job enhancements and pay increases aimed at keeping salaries on par with market rates at any time during the year. This past year, approximately 12% of IT employees received a pay increase outside of the performance review period, and 14% were promoted.

– MARY BRANDEL

52 National Information Solutions Cooperative

IT turnover: 4%
IT promotions: 14%

This data processing and billing service in Lake St. Louis, Mo., offers employees **loans of up to $3,500 for the purchase of a home PC or peripherals.** The interest-free loans are paid off through payroll deductions.

53 NORTHERN TRUST CORP.

IT turnover: 6%
IT promotions: 7%

IT employees at this Chicago-based multibank holding company enjoy flexibility in both when and where they work. Many of the 1,174 IT staffers worldwide choose to work longer daily hours, with a shortened workweek; others work from home one day or more per week.

54 Norton Healthcare

Women in IT: 59%
Minorities in IT: 16%

The benefits are plentiful at this health care provider, which runs five hospitals and manages health care clinics in Kentucky and Indiana. The company **assists its workers with the purchase of homes and PCs, and offers public transportation discounts.**

55 EASTMAN CHEMICAL CO.

Training days for IT: 7
Women in IT: 38%

As part of the development process at this chemical firm in Kingsport, Tenn., employees can work in various areas of the organization to build their experiences. Interested employees are also given opportunities outside of IT, in areas such as manufacturing, to enhance their skills.

56 HCA Inc.

IT turnover: 6%
IT promotions: 14%

At this for-profit hospital operator in Nashville (the largest in the U.S.), **the focus is on giving back – to the community and its own employees.** In 2008, 1,526 HCA employees volunteered at 101 agencies in the community, contributing over 12,000 hours of volunteer time.

57 PRICEWATERHOUSECOOPERS

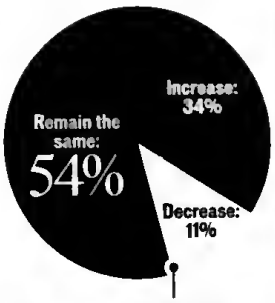
NO. 10 FOR BENEFITS
Training days for IT: 5

This New York-based accounting firm believes in giving its workers ample time to recharge. IT employees receive between 15 and 22 vacation days per year, 10 paid holidays, periodic paid holiday shutdowns, early office closings before company holidays and summertime "Flex Fridays."

By the Numbers

HIRING FORECAST

PERCENTAGE OF ORGANIZATIONS THAT IN 2009 EXPECT THE NUMBER OF U.S.-BASED IT STAFFERS TO



AVERAGE EXPECTED INCREASE: 6%

AVERAGE EXPECTED DECREASE: 5%

THE TYPICAL BEST PLACE

Revenue	$10 billion
IT budget	$286.8 million
Total number of employees	21,039
Total number of IT employees	938
Average workweek	42 hours

TRAINING

69% Average percentage of training conducted in person

31% Average percentage of training conducted remotely

6 Average number of training days for each IT employee in latest fiscal year

35% Percentage of companies that said their training budgets per IT employee will increase in 2009 compared with 2008. 9% expect a decrease, and 56% said there will be no change.

STAFFING

Average IT staff turnover rate, latest fiscal year **8%**

Average percentage of IT staff promoted, latest fiscal year **11%**

M&A ACTIVITY

35% have merged with or acquired organizations or divested business units since Jan. 1, 2008

3% of U.S.-based IT employees from all organizations were affected (laid off, transferred, etc.) by such business actions.

COMPENSATION

75% of organizations have budgeted for salary increases for IT employees in 2009

75% have budgeted for bonuses for IT employees in 2009

91% contribute to employees' 401(k) or 403(b) plans

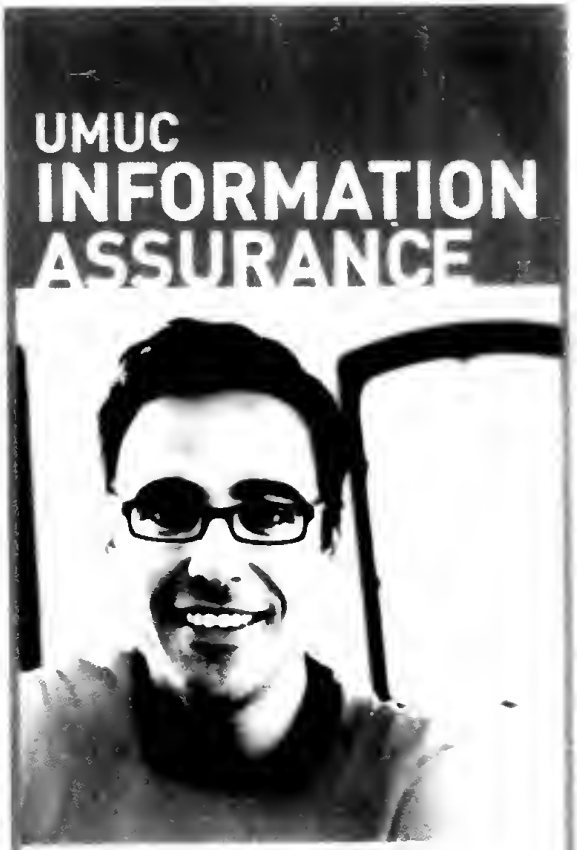
WHAT THEY DO

PERCENTAGE OF ORGANIZATIONS IN THE FOLLOWING INDUSTRIES

Health/medical services	13%
Insurance	12%
IT consulting	11%
Finance	10%
Energy/utilities	8%
Education	7%
All other industries	39%

WHERE THEY ARE

North Central U.S.	31
South Atlantic	27
Mid-Atlantic	16
Pacific	10
South Central	9
New England	5
Mountain	2



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UMUC
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IT team members gather at GWU's Virginia campus for a holiday pot luck luncheon.

George Washington University

Management backing inspires **LOYALTY**

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Why else is GWU a great place to work in IT? "The main thing is the support we get from our management," says Rachel Blevins, a marketing and communications specialist in the IT department. "They fully back the staff, and they will go to their bosses if we need something – funding, staff support or whatever."

Blevins also cites a leadership development program consisting of regular seminars, lectures and lunches, combined with a mentoring initiative. It's all aimed at fostering employees' personal and professional development.

And as at most universities, there are diverse user groups to support. Says Blevins, "We have partnerships with almost every department. We work closely with the faculty senate, faculty departments, students and student government and with staff departments."

– GARY ANTHES

59 Southern California Edison

Total employees: 17,000
IT employees: 1,246

The IT department at this utility company, one of the largest in California, has some **hot projects on its plate.** Among them are an ERP deployment, an automated-metering initiative, and a market infrastructure redesign and technology upgrade.

60 W.W. GRAINGER INC.

IT turnover: **5%**
IT promotions: **10%**

The sweet spot at this Lake Forest, Ill., company, which distributes maintenance, repair and service equipment, is its benefits package. One perk is a 100%-company-funded profit-sharing plan that gives employees an additional 10% to 25% of their yearly income based on years of service and company performance.

61 Cerner Corp.

Training days for IT: 14
Women in IT: 33%

Employees of this clinical and administrative information systems provider can get in shape at work. The Kansas City, Mo.-based company's Associate Center boasts **an indoor pool, a cardio room, a gym, a weight-lifting area, racquetball courts and ping-pong tables.**

62 PENN NATIONAL INSURANCE

IT turnover: **6%**
IT promotions: **6%**
Women in IT: **41%**
Women IT managers: **50%**

Every employee in the IT division at this Harrisburg, Pa., insurance firm, which does business in nine Eastern states, is eligible to earn payouts through a bonus program that links employees directly to corporate objectives and results.

63 CA Inc.

IT promotions: 9%
Training days for IT: 12

The IT department is one of the "premier customers" of this Islandia, N.Y., software giant. **IT employees implement the company's own software internally before it gets shipped out to external customers,** helping to improve the products before they reach the marketplace.

64 T-MOBILE USA INC

Total employees: **41,493**
IT employees: **1,456**

This Bellevue, Wash.-based business runs a community outreach program, called Huddle Up. The program has helped 43,541 children in high-risk and low-income communities get connected with after-school programs. In 2008, company volunteers served a total of 18,000 hours.

Employer Scorecard

WHICH OFFER THE BEST Training

1	Monsanto Co.
2	Verizon Wireless
3	The Mitre Corp.
4	Booz Allen Hamilton Inc.
5	George Washington University
6	Securian Financial Group
7	JM Family Enterprises Inc.
8	American Fidelity Assurance Co.
9	Marriott International Inc.
10	Commonwealth Financial Network

WHICH OFFER THE BEST Benefits

1	University of Pennsylvania
2	General Mills Inc
3	Genentech Inc
4	Raytheon Corp
5	University of Miami
6	Cornell University
7	JM Family Enterprises Inc.
8	Quicken Loans Inc
9	DTE Energy
10	PricewaterhouseCoopers

WHICH ARE BEST AT Retention

1	General Mills Inc.
2	San Diego Gas & Electric Co.
3	Securian Financial Group
4	OhioHealth
5	Scottrade
6	American Fidelity Assurance Co.
7	Michelin North America
8	Rackspace Hosting
9	University of Miami
10	Raytheon Corp.

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4	Quicken Loans Inc
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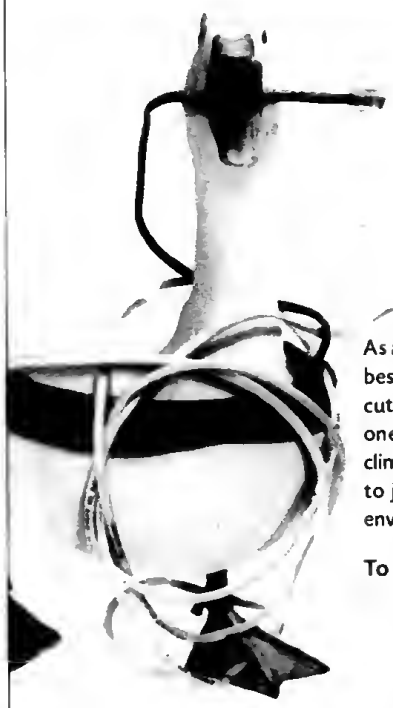
6	George Washington University
7	Verizon Wireless
8	JM Family Enterprises Inc
9	DTE Energy
10	Cedars-Sinai Health System

WHICH ARE BEST AT Career Development

1	Michelin North America
2	Apollo Group Inc.
3	Raytheon Corp.
4	National Rural Electric Cooperative Association
5	University of Miami
6	Altria Group Inc.
7	Lehigh Valley Health Network
8	Direct Energy
9	Miami Dade County
10	General Mills Inc.

SOURCE SURVEYS FROM THE 100 BEST PLACES TO WORK IN IT 2009



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To learn more about Aflac and see current job listings, visit aflac.com.

Aflac
We've got you under our wing.

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American Family Life Assurance Company of Columbus (Aflac)

5/09

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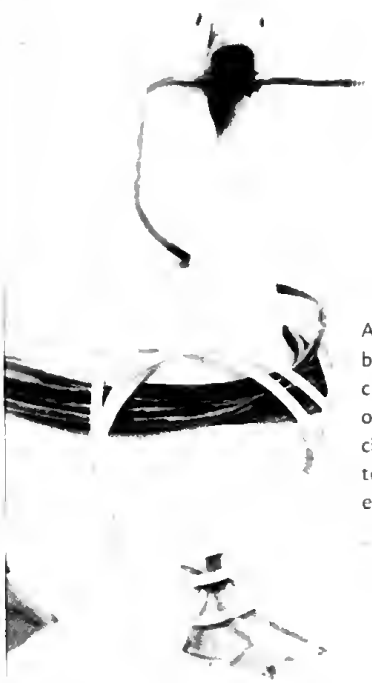

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The workspaces, suites and tools that are a part of this Boston-based health care company's "Connected Work With Connected Work" program

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Money talks at this health benefits provider in Indianapolis. **The compensation package for IT workers includes the potential to receive annual bonuses and "on the spot" awards.** A profit-sharing plan is available to all employees. The company also offers a flexible working environment.

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This investment firm, based in Valley Forge, Pa., recognizes and rewards employee contributions with an incentive program called the Vanguard Partnership Plan. Similar to a profit-sharing program, the plan enables employees to earn a share allocation based on length of service and job level.

National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

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Training is an important part of the equation at this Arlington, Va.-based organization, which represents consumer-owned power cooperatives.

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NICHOLAS GOULD, MOFFITT CANCER CENTER

Members of the Moffitt Cancer Center IT team include Natasha Power, Mark [illegible], Ed Flegenheimer and Franklin German.

H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center

A sense of **PURPOSE** infuses the IT staff

69 AT H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center in Tampa, Fla., a shared mission keeps research scientists, doctors and IT professionals collaborating. "It's very much about teamwork," says IT project manager Ed Flegenheimer. That focus on partnership is deeply ingrained in the culture at Moffitt, says Bob Elder, interim co-CIO and director of the project management office.

Such a spirit of mutual respect isn't easy to find, says Flegenheimer. But at Moffitt, he says, scientists and doctors routinely collaborate on IT projects. "They're wonderful. They understand what we're doing," says Flegenheimer.

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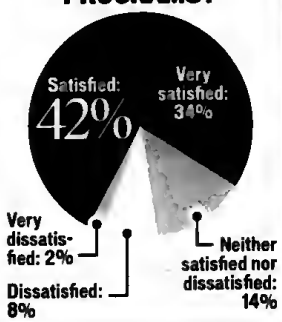
"Being part of the big picture, part of an organization trying to find better ways to treat disease – I don't think it can get any better than that," Elder says.

– ROBERT L. MITCHELL

Employee Scorecard

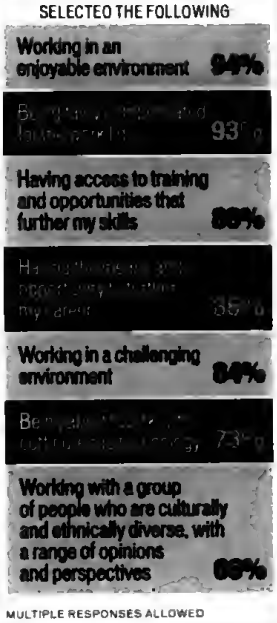
SOURCE 27,812 IT WORKER RESPONSES TO THE EMPLOYEE PORTION OF THE BEST PLACES SURVEY FROM THE FINAL 100 ORGANIZATIONS SELECTED

HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH YOUR COMPANY'S TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS?



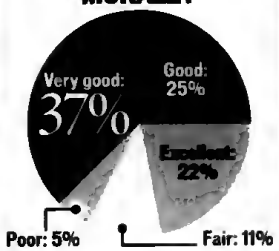
WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT ABOUT YOUR JOB?

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO SELECTED THE FOLLOWING


Working in an enjoyable environment 94%
Having access to training and opportunities that further my skills 88%
Working in a challenging environment 84%
Working with a group of people who are culturally and ethnically diverse, with a range of opinions and perspectives 66%

MULTIPLE RESPONSES ALLOWED

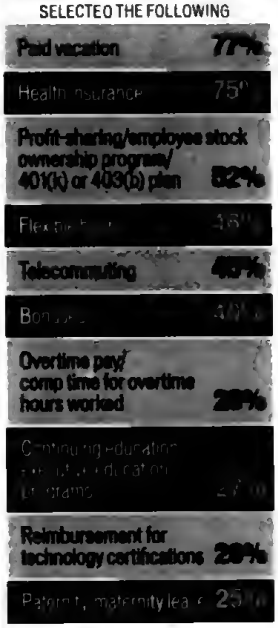
HOW DO YOU RATE YOUR IT DEPARTMENT'S MORALE?



HOW DO YOU RATE YOUR WORKPLACE STRESS LEVEL?

WHAT'S THE BEST BENEFIT?

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO SELECTED THE FOLLOWING


Paid vacation 77%
Health insurance 75%
Profit-sharing/employee stock ownership program/ 401(k) or 403(b) plan 52%
Telecommuting 46%
Overtime pay/ comp time for overtime hours worked 28%
Reimbursement for technology certifications 26%

MULTIPLE RESPONSES ALLOWED

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www.scottrade.com/careers
COMPUTERWORLD 100 BEST PLACES TO WORK IN IT 2009
Scottrade

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The workspaces, suites and tools that are a part of this Boston-based health care company's "Connected Work With Connected Work" program help IT employees work remotely (either at home or at Connected Work workspaces) one to five days per week.

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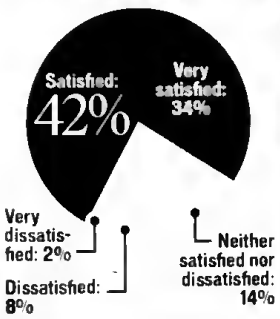

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Working in an enjoyable environment	94%
Being fairly compensated for the work I do	93%
Having access to training and opportunities that further my skills	88%
Having the means and opportunity to further my career	86%
Working in a challenging environment	84%
Being able to work with cutting-edge technology	73%
Working with a group of people who are culturally and ethnically diverse, with a range of opinions and perspectives	66%

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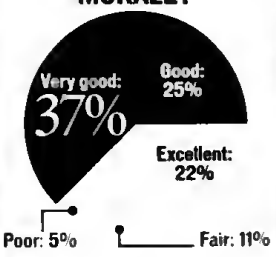

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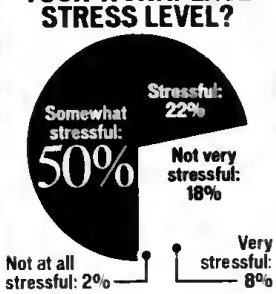
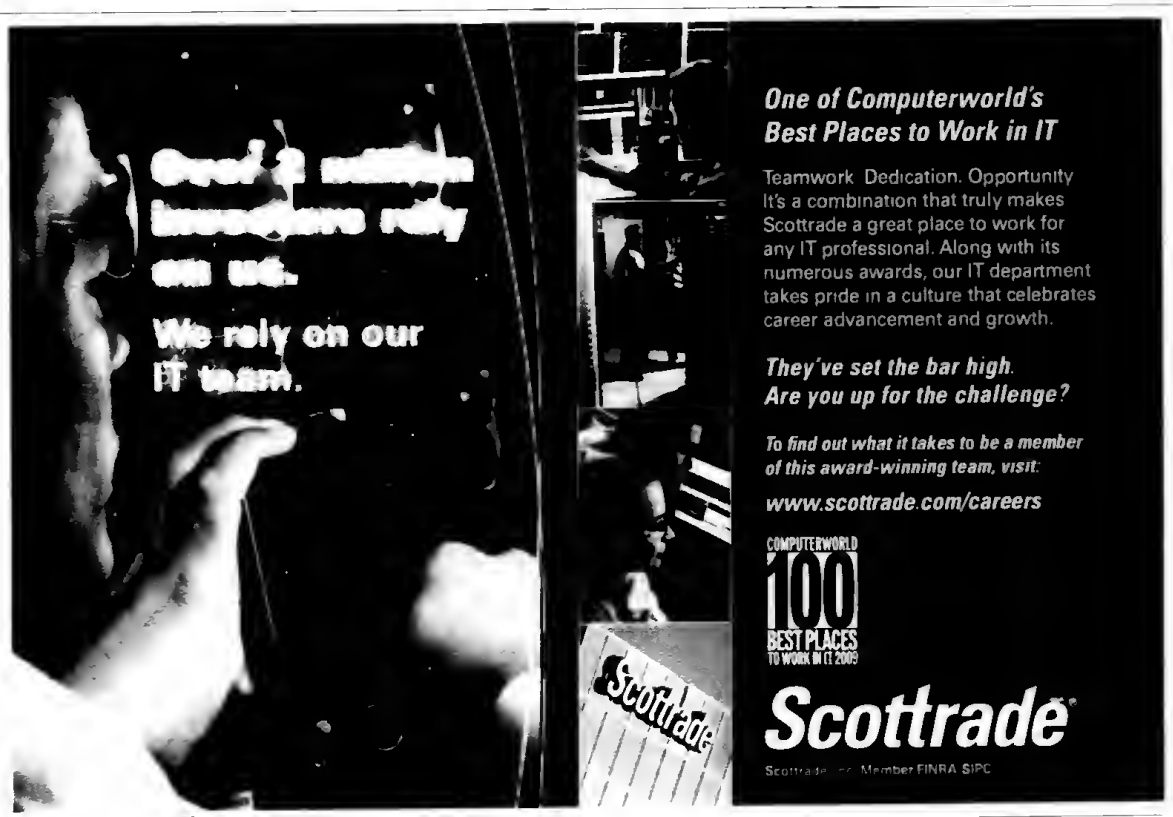


WHAT'S THE BEST BENEFIT?

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO SELECTED THE FOLLOWING

Paid vacation	77%
Health insurance	75%
Profit-sharing/employee stock ownership program/ 401(k) or 403(b) plan	52%
Flexible hours	46%
Telecommuting	45%
Bonuses	40%
Overtime pay/ comp time for overtime hours worked	28%
Continuing education/ executive education programs	27%
Reimbursement for technology certifications	26%
Paternity/maternity leave	25%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Fairfax County Public Schools

NEXT GENERATION

Fairfax County Public Schools CIO Maribeth Luftglass shares a moment with middle a school student.

78 **PEOPLE** don't work for a public school system because of the stock options and salary, admits Maribeth Luftglass, CIO of Fairfax County Public Schools in Virginia. Instead, they tend to feel rewarded by the opportunity to influence the next generation.

The 458 IT employees at FCPS touch the lives of nearly 169,000 students through projects such as a back-end student registration tool, library and emergency response systems and classroom technologies like laptop PCs, handheld devices and wireless networks.

At FCPS, the 12th largest school district in the country, it's the intangibles – the work ethic, environment and culture – that keep IT employees engaged.

The school system regularly taps "rising stars" for its IT Leadership Development Program, a one-year course that combines leadership development, business and IT skills. "We really like to grow our own," Luftglass says.

– STACY COLLETT

70 Aetna Inc.

Women in IT: 47%
Minorities in IT: 19%

What gets IT employees at this Hartford, Conn.-based insurance firm excited? **A program that ties IT project results to employee bonus compensation.** The team bonus rewards IT employees who contribute to the success of projects both on an individual and team performance basis.

71 JACK HENRY & ASSOCIATES INC.

IT turnover: 1%
IT promotions: 19%

IT employees are rarely required to fly commercial at this Monett, Mo., company, which provides computer systems to banks and credit unions. IT workers instead arrive at the airport 15 minutes prior to departure time, flash their ID badges to the pilot and hop on one of six corporate airplanes.

72 MasterCard Worldwide

IT turnover: 4%
IT promotions: 10%

The teleworking program at this banking services company in Purchase, N.Y., has more than 400 participants. Typically, an employee will spend **two days in the office and three days out of the office,** with the schedule reversed the following week.

73 FEDEX CORP.

Women in IT: 32%
Minorities in IT: 20%

This Memphis-based package-delivery company serves over 220 countries and territories and delivers 7.5 million packages every day. Training keeps employees on their toes. FedEx IT employees who study at institutes of higher education can be reimbursed for spending on tuition and associated fees.

74 Quest Diagnostics Inc.

IT turnover: 6%
IT promotions: 11%

This Madison, N.J.-based clinical laboratory, which provides round-the-clock diagnostic services to physicians and patients, offers its workers **a nationwide health initiative.** The program creates a healthier workforce through health, wellness and fitness benefits.

75 NUSTAR ENERGY LP

Total employees: 1,339
IT employees: 63

The benefits package at this San Antonio-based energy firm includes everything from medical, dental and vision coverage to life insurance and long-term care and survivor income plans. Workers also give back to their communities, volunteering more than 43,000 hours to worthy causes last year.

76 CME Group Inc.

Women in IT: 19%
Minorities in IT: 41%

IT workers at this company, which owns the Chicago Mercantile Exchange and the Chicago Board of Trade, can **take advantage of three work/life balance policies.** Their choices include taking time off after working beyond a regular schedule, using flextime and working from off-site locations.

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IT promotions: 10%
Training days for IT: 10

Communication events, reward and recognition programs, and networking activities help unite employees at this food company in Northfield, Ill., the largest in the U.S. Last year, IT employees learned about IT strategies at more than two dozen conferences hosted by IT leadership.

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☐ Monitoring and Management ☐ Cables/Wires ☐ Line Conditioning ☐ Mobile Protection ☐ Surge Protection
☐ UPS Upgrade ☐ Don't Know
Purchase time frame? ☐ <1 Month ☐ 1–3 Months ☐ 3–12 Months ☐ 1 Year Plus ☐ Don't Know
You are (check 1) ☐ Home/Home Office ☐ Business (<1000 employees) ☐ Large Corp (>1000 employees)
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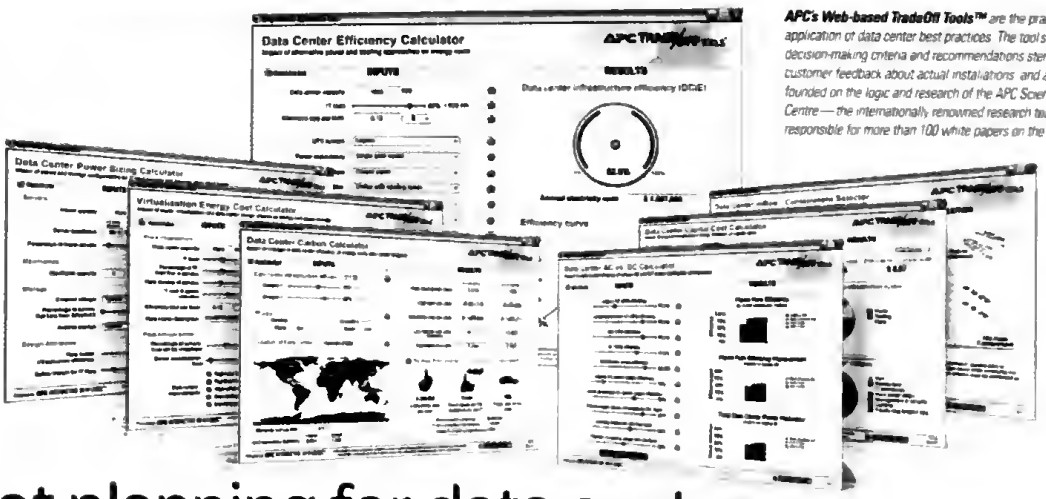
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Data Center Power Sizing Calculator
Virtualization Energy Cost Calculator
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KPMG

Employees are offered **FLEXIBLE SCHEDULES,** plus paid volunteer time

JIM CORAL/SKI KPMG

KPMG IT team members include Niranjana Mapitigama, Maureen Gilchrist, Julie Lee, Ben Weiss and Brent Anderson

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[illegible] 5

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Training days for IT: 7

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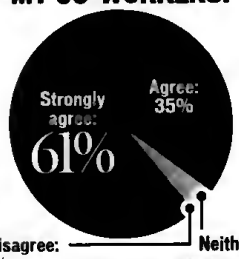
Employee Scorecard

I HAVE A GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH MY CO-WORKERS.



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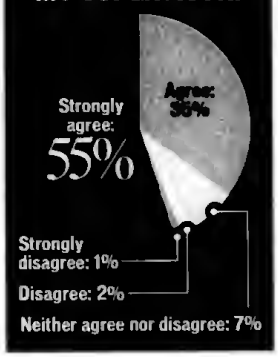

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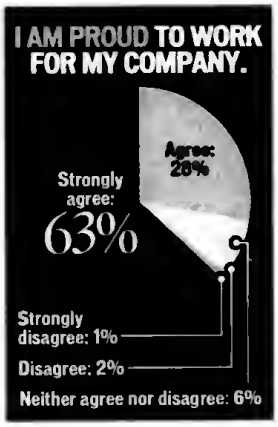

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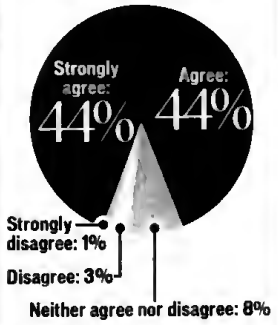

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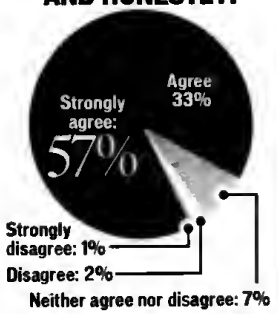
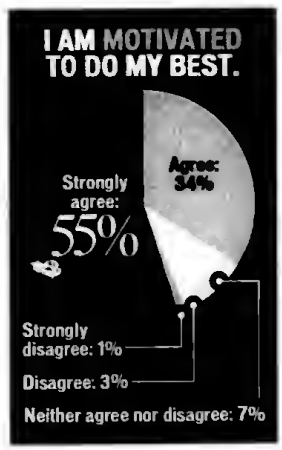


I AM MOTIVATED TO DO MY BEST.



SOURCE: 27,812 IT WORKER RESPONSES TO THE EMPLOYEE PORTION OF THE BEST PLACES SURVEY FROM THE FINAL 100 ORGANIZATIONS SELECTED

Best Places to Work[5]

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By setting our sights on recruiting the most qualified cross-section of Information Technology professionals, Quest Diagnostics is building a team that blends the strengths of many individuals with the support and challenges offered by a focused, globally competitive company.

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Quest Diagnostics

the journey begins with you

COMPUTERWORLD 100 BEST PLACES TO WORK IN IT

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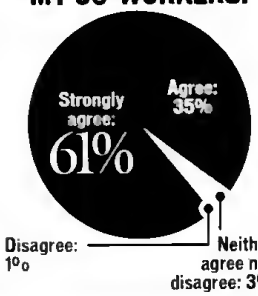

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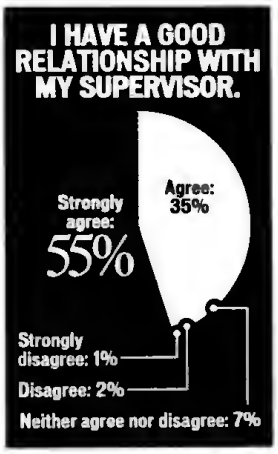

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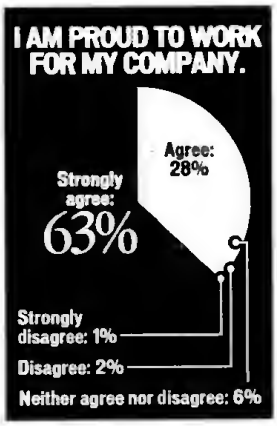

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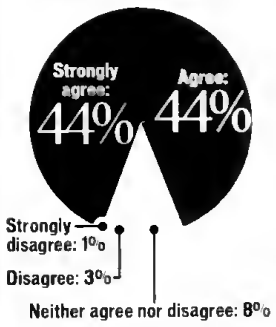

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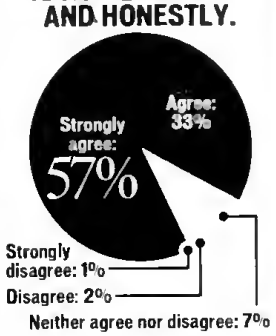

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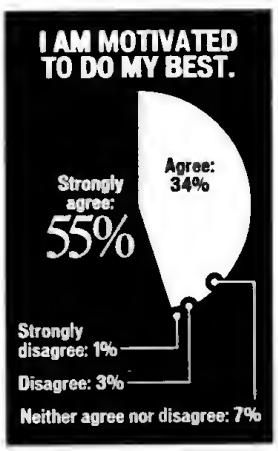

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By setting our sights on recruiting the most talented cross-section of Information Technology professionals, Quest Diagnostics is building a team that combines the strengths of many individuals with the support and challenges offered by a focused, dynamic, competitive company.

Want to discover where you could fit in our top-ranked setting? Complete an applicant profile at Quest Diagnostics.com.

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Quest Diagnostics

COMPUTERWORLD 100 BEST PLACES TO WORK IN IT

In 2009, Computerworld ranked Quest Diagnostics Incorporated a "Best Place to Work" for the fifth consecutive year.

Avanade IT staffer Ryan Wallace is working with Windows Server 2008 R2 – even before it's available to the public.

Avanade Inc.

TRAINING opportunities are as limitless as the projects

87 DESPITE being a joint venture of two huge companies – Microsoft Corp. and Accenture Ltd. – Seattle-based Avanade embodies a spirit of adventure and entrepreneurship, its employees say.

Ryan Wallace, an infrastructure engineer, puts together the hardware and software the company's software developers use. "I love the fact that I get to work with all the brand-new stuff, before other people even hear of it," he says.

Staying at the leading edge requires a lot of training, and every Avanade professional employee is expected to attend a certain amount each year, on company time, Wallace says.

"One of the things that really sets Avanade apart is its focus on its people," he says. "That comes in many forms, but one of the most visible is the training."

– GARY ANTHES

BAE Systems Inc.

86 PERHAPS the most unique benefit at this defense and IT services company in Rockville, Md., is its internal employee assignment process. A panel that includes the recruiting group and all directors and senior managers meets weekly to plan the placement of employees, thus reducing the risk of workers being laid off after they complete projects.

Last year, the panel transferred an average of 50 staff members per month to other positions within the organization. The placement process also gives employees the opportunity to change positions for career enhancement, personal or organizational development, and project and customer requirements.

88 Compuware Corp.

IT turnover: 2%
IT promotions: 5%

Learning is an ongoing activity at this software and IT services provider in Detroit. **IT employees are offered training throughout the year on business-critical technologies and skills.** Founded in 1973, Compuware has locations in more than 30 countries.

89 APPLIED MATERIALS INC.

Training days for IT 9
Women in IT 28%

This maker of semiconductor production equipment in Santa Clara, Calif., offers a flexible work location program that allows employees to work from any site, a customer's site, a partner's office or their own homes. Thirty percent of the IT department participates in that program.

90 Temple University

Women in IT: 30%
Minorities in IT: 39%

Considering the rising cost of higher education, this is a big-ticket perk: Employees at this Philadelphia-based university **pay no tuition for undergraduate and graduate programs.** Spouses receive half off all tuition, and children pay no tuition for up to 10 semesters of study.

91

IT turnover 5%
IT promotions 12%

This Chicago-based health care insurer extends its wellness campaigns to its employees. A [illegible] This money can be used for anything related to wellness, such as gym memberships or workout clothes.

92 The Sherwin-Williams Co.

Women in IT: 29%
Minorities in IT: 32%

The IT department at this paint manufacturer and retailer has **a dedicated "engagement professional" who ensures that IT employees optimize their career opportunities.** That person performs employee satisfaction surveys at least once a year and offers career coaching.

93 CORNELL UNIVERSITY

NO 6 FOR BENEFITS
Training days for IT 5

This Ivy League university in Ithaca, N.Y., is focused on being a "strengths-based employer." [illegible] Managers are urged to invest time in developing employees' strengths rather than remediating weaknesses.

Employer Scorecard

SOURCE: SURVEYS FROM THE 100 BEST PLACES TO WORK IN IT 2009

TOP FIVE COMPENSATION BENEFITS

PERCENTAGE OF ORGANIZATIONS THAT OFFER THE FOLLOWING:

- **98%** 401(k) or 403(b) plans
- **90%** Individual employee performance bonuses
- **73%** Employee referral bonus programs
- **72%** Overtime pay
- **57%** Profit-sharing or employee stock ownership plans

VACATION

- **15** DAYS on average of paid vacation are provided after one year of service
- **23** DAYS on average of paid vacation are provided after 10 years of service
- **29** DAYS is the maximum number of paid vacation days offered

WOMEN IN IT

- Average percentage of female IT managers: **32%**
- Average percentage of female IT staffers: **34%**

MINORITIES IN IT

- Average percentage of minority IT managers: **18%**
- Average percentage of minority IT staffers: **29%**

TOP FIVE BENEFITS

PERCENTAGE OF ORGANIZATIONS THAT OFFER THE FOLLOWING

Health insurance	100%
Paid vacation	100%
Flexible hours	98%
Employee assistance programs	97%
College tuition reimbursement	96%

COMMUNICATION

- **71%** of companies conduct a survey of IT employee satisfaction at least once a year.
- **49%** ask IT employees to formally evaluate their managers each year.
- **62%** have formal mentoring programs for IT staff.

I HAVE ACCESS TO THE TOOLS AND TECHNOLOGIES I NEED TO DO MY JOB.

Strongly agree	38%
Agree	49%
Neither agree nor disagree	8%
Disagree	4%
Strongly disagree	1%

THIS IS A TEAM-ORIENTED COMPANY/DEPARTMENT.

Strongly agree	44%
Agree	41%
Neither agree nor disagree	9%
Disagree	4%
Strongly disagree	2%

SOURCE FOR THE TWO CHARTS ABOVE: 27,812 IT WORKER RESPONSES TO THE EMPLOYEE PORTION OF THE BEST PLACES SURVEY, FROM THE FINAL 100 ORGANIZATIONS SELECTED

Better than hitting a trifecta.

COMPUTERWORLD 100 BEST PLACES TO WORK IN IT

Norton Healthcare's Information Services employees are real IT champions. Every day they ensure our more than 10,000 employees can do their jobs efficiently and our patients' electronic medical records are always just a click away. Thanks to our IS department's dedication, Norton Healthcare is one of **Computerworld's 100 Best Places to Work in IT** three years running.

NORTON HEALTHCARE

NortonHealthcare.com/careers

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NORTON HEALTHCARE

NortonHealthcare.com/careers

CDW IT staffers Jessie Rhymes, Li Yang, Ankur Goswami, Sofia Monzon, Barbara Mousigian, Don Gieffers and CIO Jon Stevens

CDW Corp.

INTERTWINED

94 THERE'S no better workplace motivator than feeling valued, and that's what IT employees at computer reseller CDW Corp. experience every day on the job, says Jon Stevens, senior vice president and CIO. For one thing, technology is truly strategic for CDW, which not only sells technology but also uses it as the lifeblood of its service to customers, through e-commerce and traditional means. "From the board of directors down, they view us as part of a team that can make the customer experience better," Stevens says.

That means IT is involved at the collaboration phase, not just at the end stage of a strategic move.

"When problems, opportunities or new business ideas arise, IT is one of the first teams the business unit comes to," Stevens says.

That, he adds, drives a real sense of ownership within the IT group.

A recent example of this is the work IT performed over the course of an upgrade to CDW's sales system. The new release included so many functional additions that usability was suffering.

Recognizing this, the development team recommended adding some self-service capabilities, which received applause from users, improved system navigation and helped increase sales productivity, according to Stevens.

CDW's IT staffers also make time for fun. They've held a chili cook-off featuring recipes from IT leaders, a video game night for workers and their families, and a Texas Hold 'Em tournament complete with trophies for winners.

– MARY BRANDEL

95 Red Hat Inc.

Women in IT: 15%
Minorities in IT: 27%

As a leading contributor to the development of open source software, this Raleigh, N.C., company **encourages its IT employees to work on these projects – frequently during regular business hours.** This initiative drives innovation not only for Red Hat but for other companies as well.

96 INTERMOUNTAIN HEALTHCARE

IT promotions: 7%
Training days for IT: 5

This not-for-profit health system in Salt Lake City operates 20 hospitals, as well as home health care agencies. Software developers and other IT professionals work side by side with medical doctors, nurses and clinicians to design, develop and build clinical software applications.

97 Xerox Corp.

IT turnover: 6%
IT promotions: 14%

This Norwalk, Conn.-based document management technology company's e-learning IT collection includes **courses on management, leadership, communications, technology, quality and more.** In addition, there are certification preparation classes and 24/7 online mentoring.

98 MIAMI DADE COUNTY

IT turnover: 5%
IT promotions: 27%

Employees with 15 years of full-time uninterrupted service for this county along the southeast tip of the Florida peninsula receive an annual longevity bonus that's 1.5% to 3% of their base salary. IT staffers are also offered a noncontributory retirement plan, and product and services discounts.

99 Howrey LLP

Women in IT: 24%
Minorities in IT: 37%

One special benefit at this global law firm, based in Washington, is its Beyond the Stars award, one of many staff appreciation activities. **And despite its size, the firm works to retain a small-company feel.** Its 75 IT staffers work closely with teams of lawyers on litigation projects.

100 PROGRESSIVE MEDICAL INC.

Women in IT: 36%
Minorities in IT: 28%

Last year, the IT team at this Westerville, Ohio-based medical products company got a lot accomplished. Tops on the list were developing new products to better help injured claimants, improving systems availability and performance, and improving existing EDI connectivity stability.

CDW IT staffers [illegible] and CIO Jon Stevens

CDW Corp.

IT is **INTERTWINED** with the business mission

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Project Manager-Software (Implmt'n) w/Masters in Bus Admin or Info Systms or Finance & 1 yr exp. Plan & organize s/ware dvlpmt projects using SDLC principles. Prep project plans using MS Projects & participate in project planning exercises. Dsgn, dvlp s/ware applics based on object oriented, distributed, n-tier architecture using XML & SOAP over HTTP(s) messaging. J2EE compliant dsgng incl Java, JMS, EJB, MDB, JNDI, JTA, JDBC. Provide on & off-site ETRM Change Mgmt, s/ware modeling, configuration, training, testing & support for Java, Oracle, JBoss & Weblogic based trading applics. Perform bus analysis svcs. Supv 2 Consultants. 1 yr exp as Sr Consultant acceptable. Mail res Triple Point Technology Inc 301 Riverside Ave, Westport, CT 06880 Job loc: Westport, CT or in any unanticipated locs in USA.

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For the fourth consecutive year, Raymond James has made *ComputerWorld*'s list of "Best Places to Work in IT." Based in the Tampa Bay area of Florida, we offer a dynamic, friendly and casual environment in which to work, plus great beaches, mild winter climates and tropical summers in which to play.

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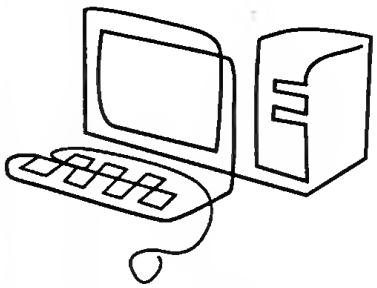

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Submit resume to Research In Motion (US), to P.O. Box 141394, Irving, TX, 75014-1394 U.S.A. ref. appropriate job title & requisition no.

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SharkTank

TRUE TALES OF IT LIFE AS TOLD TO SHARKY

That's Ergonomics!

User asks if IT has the marketing department's external CD writer. Sure enough, IT does, so pilot fish walks it down there. "Hey," user asks fish, "does everyone else have a CD drive?" Yes, fish says, then adds, Your computer is upside down. User: "Yes, the ergonomics team did that. Can you get me a drive?" Fish: Your computer is upside down. User: "Yes, but there's just this little plastic tray. It's so thin." Fish: Your computer is upside down. User: "The ergonomics team did that. Would it work if it were right side up?"

D'oh!

Big pharmaceutical company installs a new payroll system and rolls it out in January. "We had the war room ready for any calls related to issues with the first payroll for the year," says a pilot fish on the team. "Come Friday morning, we get a call from the CEO's admin saying the CEO's check is wrong. The top three project team members run up to his office. CEO says the salary is correct, but the deductions are too high. After examining his previous stub – from the end of December – they explain, 'We *do* have to take Social Security and Medicare out of your first check of the year.'"

Not Exactly

User at this big-truck dealership is having trouble getting a Web link to work, so he e-mails support pilot fish at the main office: "Can you get this link to work? I sent it to my home computer (triple the size of my work computer), but after a half hour it still won't load contents. ????" Fish replies: "You have to use Internet Explorer 6, since this site doesn't support IE7." User: "You will have to forgive my naiveness, but what is Internet Explorer 6 and how do I access it?" Fish explains, and sends user instructions on how to uninstall IE7 via Add/Remove Programs. User: "Is that the same as Microsoft SQL Server 7.0?" Fish: "Yes – just like a Mack truck is the same as a Kia."

Anyone Listening?

One big bank is acquiring another, and an IT manager from the bank being acquired is in the war room, patiently walking a user through a verification script. But between testing steps, he mutes the speakerphone to rant to others in the room – "Whatever could you *possibly* be thinking? Of *course* that's what you're supposed to do" – then unmutes to continue. Reports a pilot fish on the scene, "After about 10 minutes of this, another manager in the conference room said, 'Let me introduce you to Alice. She's an auditor from the acquiring bank.' App manager then turned beet red. Luckily, the auditor wasn't offended."

■ *Sharky wants to acquire your true tale of IT life. Just send it to me at sharky@computerworld.com. You'll snag a snazzy Shark shirt if I use it.*

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The Truth Shall Set You Free

AS INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY leaders, we're held accountable for infrastructure uptime, project deadlines and budgets. Sometimes bad things happen. Network outages, project delays or cancellations, and budget missteps have to be explained to boards, senior managers and stakeholders.

Sometimes these events are completely out of our control. Tight capital budgets require us to extend infrastructure beyond its useful life. External events or changes in corporate strategy cause timelines to be revised. Unanticipated scope creep can derail the best budget planning.

When bad things happen, does it help to point fingers at the external world, customers or senior management? Is any crisis alleviated by getting angry with staff or stakeholders? How about making excuses? In my years of experience, I've found that blame, emotions and excuses do not work.

Here's my advice for crisis management when things go wrong and resolving the problem becomes your responsibility.

1. When a crisis occurs, encourage openness and transparency in your staff. Don't shoot the messenger. By empowering everyone to communicate the events objectively, you'll get to the root cause more rapidly. Your actions will set the tone. Being calm and encouraging with your staff will reduce tensions between staff and stakeholders.

2. When the root cause is found, determine what can be done to improve the organization rather than blaming anyone. Instead of firing people, expend your energy figuring out which systems and processes should be improved. For example, if an unannounced change was made that caused serious downtime, what controls can be put in place to prevent such ad hoc changes in the future?

3. Broadly communicate the issue in terms of the lessons learned and continuous quality improvement. Many IT projects are cutting-edge and require incremental fine-tuning. We try, we evaluate, we revise, and we try again. Boards and senior management understand that perfection is a journey. If you have a sound plan that is broadly communicated, and a bad outcome occurs that teaches the organization how to do better in the future, all will be forgiven.

■ Is any crisis alleviated by getting angry with staff or stakeholders?

4. Do not hide information or sugarcoat the events. It is far better to be open from the beginning than it is to deny the truth and then have to backtrack later. In a world of instant communication via e-mail, IM, blogs and Twitter, assume that everyone knows the facts as soon as they happen. When CareGroup suffered a network outage in 2002, I learned not to be overly optimistic about restoration of service. It's better to apologize for the disruption and say that you don't know when the problem will be fixed but that you have all resources focused on the effort.

5. Openly discuss the events, their cause, the immediate corrective action taken and the long-term changes made to prevent the problem from happening again. Declare that you've made a mistake and apologize for it. This may be painful and could result in a great deal of short-term publicity, but it's better than a long-term investigation. Imagine how things would have been different had Bill Clinton had said early on, "I did have an affair with that woman, and that was wrong. I will seek counseling from religious mentors and mental health experts to ensure that my future behavior is exemplary." The issue would have disappeared in a few weeks.

In my many years of leading change and making mistakes along the way, I've found that great communication, openness, candor and admission of mistakes, followed by a sincere apology, result in healing the organization and bringing rapid closure to the situation. ■

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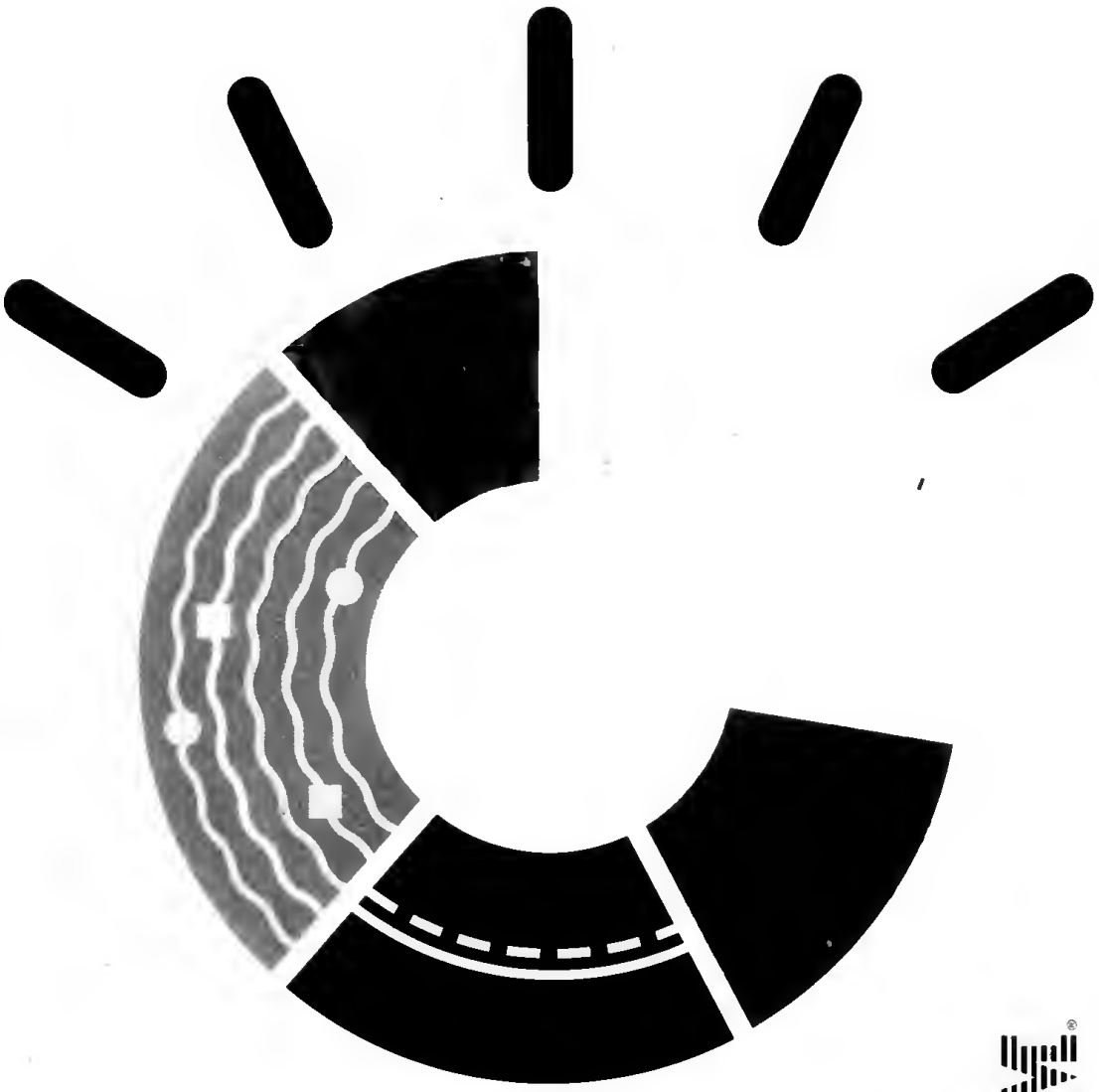

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